



Suffering in Hell

2834

HEAVEN AND HELL IN BUDDHIST PERSPECTIVE



BY

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CONCEPTION OF SPIRITS"; "THE LIFE & WORK OF
BUDDHAGHOSA," etc., etc.

WITH A FOREWORD

BY

The Right Hon'ble The Earl of Ronaldshay, P.C.,
G.C.S.I., G.C.I.E., D. Litt., D.L., etc., etc.

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FOREWORD

With the publication of the following pages Dr Bimala Charan Law adds yet another volume to the series of interesting studies of Buddhism, upon which he has for some years past been engaged. In his "Ksatriya Clans in Buddhist India" and in his larger and more detailed treatment of the same subject entitled "Some Ksatriya Tribes of Ancient India", he gave us an interesting historical account of the peoples and politics of the Ganges Valley at the time of Buddha. In his "Life and Work of Buddhaghosa" he presented us with a portrait of the great Buddhist commentator of the fifth century A D, and a little later he published a small volume on "The Buddhist Conception of Spirits". The present volume is written on much the same lines as this latter treatise and forms a useful companion volume to it. In it Dr Law sets before the reader the Buddhist idea of Heaven and Hell, or, perhaps it would be more correct to say, the ideas of Heaven and Hell prevalent amongst the people of northern India at the time of Buddha and incorporated subsequently in the Buddhist scriptures. For it is clear from the comparison which Dr. Law draws between the Buddhist and Brahmanical ideas of Hell that they are derived

from the same source. Moreover there is a good deal concerning the various Heavens and Hells of which Dr Law tells us, that is quite obviously foreign to the lofty thought and teaching of Buddha himself. The joys of Heaven are represented as being obtainable by means of what is suspiciously like a mercenary bargain, entered into in a spirit which far from being selfless is, on the contrary, frankly selfish. One example taken from a number given by Dr Law will suffice to make this clear. The daughter of a family of Rājagaha on learning that the act of giving is like the tree which fulfils every wish, at once becomes eager to practise charity. An opportunity presents itself with the appearance upon the scene of a Buddhist monk, to whom she offers a seat and food. While thus practising the virtue of charity, she prays that in return she may receive after death as a fitting reward for her piety, a whole host of heavenly gifts, including a celestial elephant. Her prayer is granted and she passes at death into the Tāvātimsa Heaven where she dwells in a golden mansion with a retinue of a thousand heavenly maidens, and receives amongst other things the coveted elephant. Not in this way, it need hardly be pointed out, is Nirvāna, the *Summum bonum* which the Lord Buddha held out to suffering humanity, to be attained. Indeed, piety practised in this calculating spirit, far from bringing

Nirvāṇa within reach of man, could serve only to bind him more securely to the wheel of life. Dr. Law himself sums up the position concisely when he writes—"The highest of the pleasures that these Heavens bestow has a limit. . . . They can never bring about a final release from evil and hence, the experiences in Heaven, though pleasurable, are an evil to be guarded against—the more so on account of their luring attractiveness."

But it is only in the mind of the non-Indian readers that any confusion between Nirvāṇa and Heaven is likely to arise. And in his case this volume will serve to dispel any confusion that may exist. For it is made abundantly clear that the Heavens and Hells of Buddhism are places within the categories of space and time, whose inhabitants, whether gods or devils, are as much subject to the iron law of *karma* as are the dwellers upon this earth itself. In a sense the Heavens and Hells, of which we read in these pages, may be said to exist for the purpose of providing a more elaborate stage than this earth can do, for the play of the ever revolving cycle of existence and all that it involves. The various heavens make possible greater and more varied reward in the case of those who by meritorious lives, have earned it; the different hells greater and more varied measures of retribution. Dr. Law has been at pains to collect from Buddhist literature a number of descriptions both of the

pleasures of Heaven and of the sorrows of Hell. These are interesting as showing the nature of the rewards and punishments which in those early days, were considered appropriate to particular acts of piety and particular sins. The catalogue of crimes and their corresponding punishments, for example, is given in elaborate detail. And if the reader after perusal of the volume has not acquired a comprehensive knowledge of the eschatology of popular Buddhism, he will have no one but himself to blame, for Dr Law has admirably accomplished the task which he set out to perform.

November, 1924

Ronaldshay.

PREFACE

The present treatise is a thesis approved by the Calcutta University for Sir Asutosh Mookerjee gold medal, 1924. The Pāli literature is full of details regarding various Heavens and Hells recognised by the ancient Buddhists. The present volume furnishes us for the first time with an exhaustive and comparative treatment of the subject. I shall consider my labour amply rewarded if this little brochure is well received by the public.

I am glad to put in an appendix Dr B M Barua's short note entitled "Books of Stories of Heaven and Hell" which will no doubt be very interesting to readers.

I am greatly indebted to the Right Hon'ble The Earl of Ronaldshay, P C, G C S I, G C I E, D Litt, D L, etc, etc, Ex Governor of Bengal, who takes great interest in my works, for his learned foreword to this volume.

Calcutta, 24, Sukea's Street, April, 1925	}	BIMALA CHARAN LAW
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PART I—HEAVEN

HEAVENS AS GENERALLY DESCRIBED IN THE NIKĀYAS

THE Pāli literature describes the various heavens and their respective positions, one above the other, and the gods that reside there progressing in power and refinement. The Dīgha Nikāya of the Sutta-Piṭaka refers to some of the heavens in the Kevaddha Sutta. There the Buddha relates to Kevaddha how a bhikkhu of his congregation was troubled in mind by a certain problem (*viz.* where are earth, water, fire and wind—the four great elements, completely

destroyed?). The bhikkhu practised such a samādhi (meditation). that the path leading to the world of gods became clear to him. First he went to the Cātummahārājika gods for the solution of the above problem. He was asked by them to go to the four Mahārājās of the Cātummahārājika heaven. He then went to them and put the same question, but was asked to go to the gods of the Tāvātimsa heaven, who sent him on to their King Sakka who sent him on to the Yāma gods who sent him on to their King Suyāma who sent him on to the Tusita gods who sent him on to their

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PART I—HEAVEN

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Heavens in the
Kevaddha Sutta.

King Santusita who sent him on to the Nimmānaratī gods who sent him on to their King Sunimmita who sent him on to the Paranimmitavasavattī gods who sent him on to their King Vasavattī who advised him to go to the gods of the Brahma world. He had to practise such a meditation as would enable him to go to the Brahmāloka. He went to the gods of the Brahma world who sent him to Mahābrahmā who appeared before him. The bhikkhu put to him the question which even Mahābrahmā could not answer, and he was advised to go to the Buddha. At last the Buddha gave a satisfactory reply to his query (*Dīgha Nikāya*, Vol I, pp 211 223, *Kevaddha Suttanta*)

Seven regions of the
gods compared with
the seven Vedic
regions

It is clear from the above account that there are seven regions of the gods specified—there is the Cātummahārājika heaven, next

the Tāvātimsa heaven, next in order come the regions of the Yāma gods, the Tusita gods, the Nimmānaratī gods and the Paranimmitavasavattī gods—the gods of these six heavens belong to the Kāmāvacaraloka (i.e. the world as sensed and subjectively the mental plane of sensuous experience). Next comes the Brahma world. With this we may compare the seven *lokas* or regions of the Vedic literature and we observe an agreement, though, at first sight, there seems to be a difference. The seven Vedic regions are Bhu, Bhuvah, Svar, Maha, Jana, Tapas

and Satya or the Brahmāloka. The twice four or eight great kings (Mahārājikas) are apparently the eight *Dikpālas*, the lords of the quarters, so that their regions make up nothing but the *Bhurloka* with its ruling deities. The *Bhuvar-loka* of which Indra is the master has its counter-part in the *Tāvātimsa* heaven where Sakka, who is the same as Indra, dominates. The name *Tāvātimsa* or thirty three is very significant as the Vedic gods are only thirty three in number. The *Tapo loka* is also called the *Satya loka* or the *Brahma loka* in Brahmanical literature. Thus the highest regions in the two systems are identical. In the *Brahmajāla Sutta* of the same Nikāya (Dialogues, II, p. 31) also we have a reference to Brahmā and his palace. The *Tevijja Sutta* of this Nikāya (Vol. I pp. 236 foll.) also speaks of the union of men with Brahmā, but there Brahmā appears to stand more for *Brahma* of the Brahmanical system than Brahmā, the Creator God.

The World of Radiance (*Ābhassara loka*) described in the *Brahmajāla Suttanta* is one of the higher *Brahmalokas*. The above *Suttanta* tells us that at the beginning of a new world system a being falls from the *Ābhassara loka* on account of loss of life or merit and he is reborn in the *Brahmavimāna* which is then empty and there he dwells with his mental body (*monomaya*), living in joy having a lustrous body and

Ābhassaraloka

moving in the sky (Dīgha Nikāya, Vol I, p 17)

The Buddha relates later on in the same Suttanta that this god who is first reborn in the Brahmavimāna or the palace of Brahmā is the Great Brahmā he considers himself superior to the other Ābhassaradevas who are subsequently reborn in the same vimana and these latter also show him the same respect

The Brahmajāla Suttanta also tells us of two classes of gods, the Khuddā padosikā and the Manopadosikā. Both these classes are of a rather low order. Thus the Blessed One says that the Khuddāpadosikā gods spend their time in laughing, playing and enjoying sensual pleasures. For this reason they lose control over their mind, as a result of which they fall down from their situation and are reborn in the human world (Dīgha Nikāya, Vol I, pp 19 20). Of the second class, viz, the Manopadosikā gods, the Buddha says that they think much of one another. In consequence of excessive thinking, their mind becomes polluted and on account of pollution of their mind, they fall down from that situation and are reborn in the human world (Ibid, p 20).

Classification of gods
in the Anguttara
Nikaya

In the Anguttara Nikāya also we have a classification of the gods. It says that there

are the Cātummahārājika gods, Tāvātimsa gods, Yāma gods, Tusita gods, Nimmānarati gods, Paranimmitavasaṇattins, Brahmakāyikas and also gods superior to them (Anguttara Nikāya, Vol 1, p 210)

In the Mahāsamaya Suttanta, the Buddha mentions some gods who are found on this earth and also in the regions above. There are gods of Kapilavatthu, gods of the Himālayas, gods of Sātāgira, gods of Vessāmitta, Kumbhīra of Rājagaha, Dhatarattha, ruler of the east and his sons, each of whom was named Inda, Virūha, king of the Kumbhandas ruling the south, his sons, each of whom was named Inda, Virūpakka, king of the nāgas ruling in the south and his sons, each of whom was called Inda, Kuvera, king of the Yakkhas, ruling the north and his sons, each of whom was called Inda, servants of the four mahārājās, Māyā, Kutendu, Vetendu, Vitucca, Vitue, Candana, Kāmasettha, Kinnughandu, Nighandu, Panāda, Opamañña, Mātali, the charioteer of gods, the musician Cittasena, Nala, Janesabha, Pañcasikha, Suriyavaccasā, the Nāgas from Vesālī with Tacchaka, Kambalas, Assataras and Pāyāgas with all their relatives, Yamunā, Dhatarattha, Erāvana the mahānāga, Kālakañjas, Vepacitti, Sucitti, Pahārāda and Namuci, all the sons of Bah, each of whom was named Veroca, gods of water, earth, fire and air,

The Mahāsamaya
Suttanta gods of
the earth

Varunas, Soma with Yasa, gods of compassion and kindness, Venhu (Viṣṇu), Sahalī, Asamas, Yamas, moon with its followers, sun with its followers, Mandavalāhaka with stars, Vāsava, the chief of Vasus, Sahabhu Aritthakas, Rojas, Varunas, Sahadhammas, Accutas, Anejakas, Suleyyas Vāsavanesi deities samanas, mahāsamanas, mānusas, Khuddāpadosikās Manopadosikās, Haraya Lohitavāsīs Pāragas, Mahāpāragas, Sukka Aruna, Veghanasa, Odātagayha, Vicakkhana, Sadāmattha, Hāragaja, Missaka, Pajjunna, Khemiyas, Tusita and Yāma gods, Katthakas, Lambitakas, Lāmasetthas, Joti, Āsava, Nimmīnaratī, Paranimmita, Tissa, Subrahmā, Sanamkumāra and Mahābrahmā (Dīgha Nikāya, Vol II, pp 253 foll) In the Mahāvastu we find a reference to all these gods with the addition of Śiva (cf Mahāvastu, Edited by Senart, Vol I, p 245, Ibid, Vol III, p. 68, Ibid, Vol III, p 77)

The Dhānañjāni Suttam of the Majjhima Nikāya furnishes the following account of the various grades of the gods —Cātummahārājikā, Tāvatisā, Yāmā, Tusitā, Nimmānaratī, Paranimmitavasavattī

Various grades of gods
in the Dhānañjāni
Suttam

After these there is the Brahmāloka

One can reach the Brahmāloka after meditating on mettā, karuṇā, muditā and upekkhā and after developing these to the extent of all

HEAVENS AS DESCRIBED IN NIKĀYAS 7

the quarters (Majjhima Nikāya, Vol II, pp 194-195)

The *Imhammacakkappavattana Sutta* besides mentioning the lower gods, gives the designations of the various grades of gods who make up the *Brahmaloka*. After giving a list of the six grades of gods from the *Bhummadevas*, it thus goes on to the *Brahmapārisajjā* and other devas mentioned below -

1 *Bhummadevas* i.e. gods living on earth such as *Āṇikkadevas*

1 *Cātummahārājikadevas* i.e. gods who are subjects of four guardian angels of four quarters

2 *Tāvātimsadevas* i.e. gods dwelling in the *Tāvātimsa* heaven

3 *Yāmadevas* i.e. gods dwelling in *Yāma* heaven

4 *Tusitadevas*

5 *Nimmānaratidevas*

6 *Paranimitavāsavattidevas*

These are the six *Kāmvacaradevas* in heaven

Brahmapārisajjā Vehapphalā

Brahmapurohitā Avihā

Mahābrahma Atappā

Parittābhā Sudassā

Appamanābhā Sudassī

Ābhassarā Akamitthakā

Parittosubha

Appamanasubhā

Subhakiṇṇakā

Abhassara
Brahmas

Devas dwelling
in Brahmaloḳa

(Catubhāṇavāri, Sinhalese Edition, pp 30-35)

the quaricāyatana, Ālūṇaṇāyātana, Nevasañ-
pp 194-195) āyatana gods (Majjhima Nikāya, Vol

The I The bhikkhus who are pious, faithful,

Gods in the
macakkappa
Sutta

learned, charitable and wise, exert to be

the Cātummahārājika heaven knowing

lease of life there is very long They are

Brahmālohis heaven in consequence of their exertion

gods from, they exert to be born in other devalokas

Brahmā being from the Tāvātimsa heaven to the

1 Iṇṇānāsāṇṇāyātana heaven, learning that

such as se of life in these devalokas is very long and

1 're born in these devalokas in consequence of

are sub exertion (Majjhima Nikāya, Vol III, pp

2 13) Many of the Brahmakāyikadevas are

1-4 mentioned in the Brahmanimantanika Sutta

of the same Nikāya (Majjhima Nikāya, Vol I,

p 329)

In the Ātānātiya Suttanta of the Dīgha Nikāya

Devas and spirits
in the Ātānātiya
Suttanta

we find King Vessavana Kuvera

reciting the Rakkhāmanta of

Ātānāta In the course of this

Rakkhāmanta we find the names of several spirits

and devas which are of importance (Dīgha

Nikāya, Vol III, pp 204 205)

The sun is called Aditi's child (Adityāputto)

(Dialogues of the Buddha, pt III, 190 fn) This

is quite in agreement with the Vedic idea of the

sun as one of the ādityas It further mentions

Dhātaraṭṭha, the sovereign lord of the Gandhabbas

(Dīgha Nikāya, Vol III, p 197), Virūḥa, the

king of the Kumbhānda sprites, Virūpākha, the
Protecting Yakkhas-
names similar to
those of Vedic gods king of the Nāgas and Kuvera,
 the king of the Yakkhas

Vessavaṇa gives a list of some
 of the Yakkhas to whom an appeal should be made
 for protection against these creatures, Yakkhas,
 Gandhabbas Kumbhāndas and Nāgas who, as
 he says, are not humane but are rough irascible
 and violent. It is curious to find among the
 protecting yakkhas such names as Indra Soma,
 Varuna and Pajāpati all of whom are great Vedic
 gods and Bhṛadvāja who is known as a great
 Rsi in the Vedic literature

We have seen that according to the Dīgha
 Nikāya all the above gods including the great

The Buddha
superior to all gods Brahmā himself were inferior
 to the Buddha. In fact,
 throughout the Buddhist literature, we find that
 the gods including Brahmā came on their visits
 to the Buddha in order to do him homage or
 sometimes to carry out some of his orders. We
 learn from the Khuddakapāṭha Commentary that
 the gods came on such visits after mid night
 (Khuddakapāṭha Commentary, p 114)

The Anguttara Nikāya says explicitly that the
Faith in the Buddha
leads to the attain-
ment of sambodhi Catummahārājika devas, the
 Tusita Yāma, Tāvātimsa,
 Nimmānarati and Paranimmita
 vasavattī devas who have strong faith
 in the Buddha, Dhamma and Saṃgha and can

claim to have acquired the stage of sotāpanna, are not liable to fall into hell but are destined for the attainment of sambodhi. (Aṅguttara Nikāya, Vol. III., p. 333). In another part of the Aṅguttara Nikāya we are told that Yama, the ruler of the Yāma heaven, wished to be born

down here upon earth in order to get the benefit of receiving the sacred dhamma from the

Yama's desire to serve the Tathāgata.

Buddha and thereby improve his own condition. (Aṅguttara Nikāya, Vol. I., p. 142). The Aṅguttara Nikāya (I. 142) tells us that King Yama after seeing various punishments of the sinners, thought thus, "people commit sins in the world and they are punished in consequence thereof." He expressed his desire to become a human being and serve the Tathāgata who might appear on earth and hear him preaching the dhamma and realise it.

In another section of the Aṅguttara Nikāya the Exalted One says repeatedly that Sakka, the ruler of the devas, was the person whose rāga, dosa and moha (passion, hatred and delusion) had not yet left him and therefore he was much inferior to a Bhikkhu who had reached Arahatship and was free from the defects of ordinary beings. (Vol. I., pp. 144-145).

In the Mahāparinibbāna Suttanta (Dīgha Nikāya, II., p. 96) the Licchavi nobles who were accoutred in dresses of various dazzling

The Licchavis compared with Tāvātimsa gods

colours, such as, red, white, blue, etc., are compared to the Tāvātimsa gods, they are put up by the Buddha as living illustrations of the happy and enviable life in the paradises as popularly known. A similar comparison of the Loehevīs with the Tāvātimsa gods is also made in the Mahāvastu avadāna (Vol I, p 262 and vide my work "Some Ksatriya Tribes of Ancient India, pp 54-55)

Powers and short comings of gods Gods possessing great and miraculous power and great influence can shake the earth (Dīgha Nikāya, Vol II, p 108) The same Suttanta tells us that the gods living in the sky, who are conscious of the earth, and the gods living on the earth, who are conscious of the earth, are subject to grief and lamentation like ordinary human beings while the gods who are free from attachment are not subject to grief although they are conscious of it and have knowledge of the impermanence of things (Dīgha Nikāya, Vol II, pp 139-140)

We have seen that Sakka was the ruler of the Tāvātimsa gods according to the Dīgha Nikāya (Dīgha Nikāya, Vol II, p 263) The Dhammapada Commentary explains the various names of Sakka with their significance. Buddhaghosa here explains

The meaning of the various names of Sakka as explained in the Dhammapada commentary

that Sakka is called *Maghavā*, a shortened form of *Maghamānava* because he was a human being in the past, he is called

Purindada, because he makes gifts or *dāna* first. He is named Sakka inasmuch as he practises charity with strong faith, and *Vāsava* because he offered an *āvāsa* or dwelling place. He won the name of *Sahassakkho* for himself, because of his power to think of a thousand things at the same time and he is called *Sujampati* from the name of his wife Sujātā, a daughter of the king of the Asuras. According to the Brahmanic mythology, the name of his wife is Śacī and Sujā is evidently a different reading of the name Śacī which is found in the R̥gveda itself. And Śacī is the daughter of the Asura Puloma according to the Brahmanical myths, so that there is no difference here. The concrete conception of a thousand eyes in the Hindu myth has been changed into an abstract conception of the power to attend to a thousand things at one and the same time. According to Buddhaghosa, Sakka is so called because he acquired the state of a Sakka after fulfilling seven vows (Dhammapada Commentary, Vol. I., pt. II., pp. 264-265).

The Majjhima Nikāya thus describes the Vejayanta palace of Inda.—

Inda said to Moggallāna thus, "I have built the Vejayanta palace after defeating the asuras in a battle between the devas and the asuras. It consists of one hundred crests each having seven hundred Kūṭāgāras (pinnacled rooms). Each Kūṭāgāra

Vejayanta described.

contains seven times seven dancing girls Each dancing girl has seven times seven female attendants " (Majjhima Nikāya, Vol I, p 253).

The Samyutta Nikāya prescribes that for acquiring the state of Sakka, it was necessary to observe seven *vatas* or vows for going through courses of discipline —

1 service to parents throughout one's own life

2 respect for the elders of the family

3 speaking sweet words

4 not speaking malicious words

5 remaining free from stinginess

6. speaking the truth throughout life

7 not cherishing anger throughout life

8 checking anger when it arises

(Samyutta Nikāya, Vol I, p 228)

In the Mahāparinibbāna Suttanta the Buddha mentions that the gods had their parisa or assemblies which are as follows

The parisas or assemblies of the gods

1 Cātummahārājikā parisā the assembly of the Cātummahārājika gods

2 Tāvātimsaparīsā, the assembly of the Tāvātimsa gods

3 Maraparīsā, the assembly of Māra

4 Brahmaparīsā, the assembly of Brāhmā (Dīgha Nikāya, Vol II p 109)

It was, in such an assembly of the Tāvātimsa gods, that the question of the birth of the Bodhi-satta was discussed and arrangements made for his descent on earth according to the Lalita Vistara. The *pariṣad* or the assembly was an important political institution with the Ksatriya tribes that lived in eastern India at the time that Buddhism originated. The *pariṣad* was also a very important institution with the Vedic Aryans.

The Aṅguttara Nikāya tells us that the ministers and members of the assembly of the Cātummahārājika devas, wander about on earth on the eighth day of the moon every fortnight, enquiring whether among men there were persons who performed good deeds by showing respect to their parents and the Samāṇas and Brāhmanas and whether they observed the fast as required by the Buddhist canon. It is added that on the fourteenth day of the moon, the sons (puttā) of the four Mahārājās also went about wandering over the earth on the same mission. On the fifteenth day of the moon, it is said that the four Mahārājās themselves go about enquiring whether men were observing the uposatha. It is said that the four Mahārājās then present themselves at the sabhā called Sudhamma of the Tāvātimsa gods and submit a report about the small or large number of men whom they find observing the uposatha properly and performing

Duties of ministers
and members of the
assembly of the
Cātummahārājika
devas

the good deeds as mentioned above (Anguttara Nikāya, Vol I, pp 142 143)

Many stories are told in Buddhist literature of men who often after death and sometimes even while living on earth, paid visits to the heavens

King Nimi's visit to heaven The Nimi Jātaka relates that
King Nimi went to heaven and

saw the following sights —

1 Biranivimāna a garden full of trees, flowers, kapparukkha, ponds, etc

2 Sonadinna devaputta's seven gold vimānas

3 Phalīkavimāna

4 Manivimāna

5 Veluriyavimāna

He went to the Sumeru mountain and visited seven mountains surrounding it, which were the habitations of the Cātummahārājikadevas. Thence he went to the Tāvātimsa devaloka where he saw the image of Indra. Thence he went to the Mote-Hall of the gods, which was well built, artistically beautiful, divided into eight parts having pillars of lapis lazuli. Indra and other gods came to receive Nimi and he was given his seat by the side of Indra, the chief of the gods (Nimi Jātaka, Fausboll, Vol. VI, p 104 foll)

The Acchariyabbhutatadhamma Suttam of the Majjhima Nikāya narrates how the Bodhisatta came down from the Tusita Heaven to be born here upon the earth. When the Bodhisatta entered the womb of Queen Māyā leaving the Tusita heaven,

a very bright light appeared illuminating the deva,
 Brahṃā and the human worlds,
 Gods and Bodhisatta's birth etc It was more brilliant
 than the heavenly light By
 the help of the light the beings of one world could
 see the beings of another world After the birth
 of the Bodhisatta, four gods came from four
 quarters to guard the Bodhisatta and his mother
 against human or non human foes (Majjhima
 Nikāya, Vol III, p 120) Similarly in the Laṭṭa
 Vistara we read that when the Bodhisatta fallen
 from the Tusita heaven, entered the womb of
 Māyā, a lotus extending up to the Brahmāloka
 appeared, which became visible to Mahābrahmā
 alone (Laṭṭāvistara, Ed by Lefmann, p 64)
 Again we read that when the Bodhisatta entered
 Māyā's womb, the earth with its forest trembled
 six times, golden lustre spread all round, all sins
 were removed, the gods became delighted, a well-
 decorated chariot appeared and the charioteer
 stood motionless in it (Ibid, p 72) For seven
 nights holy lustre extended up to the Brahmāloka
 (Ibid, p 74)

The Auguttara Nikāya furnishes a good deal of
 information about the merito-
 rious deeds qualifying men to be
 translated to the various regions
 of heaven The Enlightened One
 tells Sīriputta on one occasion "He who prac-
 tises charity without freeing himself from the

Merits entitling 1 couple
 to reach various
 regions of heaven

taint of selfishness, being attached to the object of charity, hoping for wealth and enjoyment in after-life, in consequence of such charity, after death will be reborn in the heaven of the Cātummahārājika gods. Those among the Cātummahārājikas, the Tusitas, Yāmas, Tāvātimsas, the Nimmānaratis and the Paranimmitavasavattins who have acquired strong faith in the Buddha, the Dhamma and the Saṅgha, may be said to have acquired the state of *Sotāpanna*, they are not liable to fall into hell and are destined to attain sambodhi (Anguttara Nikāya, Vol III, pp 332 333)

Similarly in the same Nikāya we are told of a great Buddhist teacher of the name of Sunetta who had many lay disciples. Preaching to his pupils about the means of winning the Brahmāloka, he taught that those among his disciples who could thoroughly comprehend and grasp his teachings, would be entitled to reach the heaven of Brahmā, but those who failed to appreciate them fully would enter the regions of the six lower heavens (Anguttara Nikāya, Vol IV, pp 103 104).

Buddhaghosa in his Visuddhimagga states the circumstances under which men may attain to heaven. A person performs meritorious deeds for the attainment of heavenly bliss and in consequence of such deeds, he is reborn in heaven (Vol I, p 199). A person who is an observer of the

precepts formulated by the great teacher and is devoted to the practice of these precepts, is reborn in heaven after death and dissolution of the body (Vol I, p 9) It is stated in that work that sīla or precept is the best ladder by which one may reach the regions of the gods (Vol I, p 10) In another place Buddhaghosa observes that a person is reborn in heaven by meditating on Buddha's qualities (Vol I, p 213) The Visuddhimagga observes that even the lower animals can attain to heaven, it records that a frog that attentively listened to the teachings of the Buddha, was born after death in a golden mansion in the Tāvātimsa heaven and was named Mandukadevaputta having 1,000 apsarasas as his wives This devaputta appeared before the Buddha in his vimāna, and he made it the occasion for a religious discourse, after listening to which the devaputta reached the first stage of sanctification (Vol I, pp 208-209)

The Pañcagatidīpanam also furnishes some information regarding heaven

Rewards and punishments	It states that among the gods, men and demons, those who are malicious do not live long, but those who are free from malice, attain long life Those who oppress others by confining and beating them, are subject to leprosy, madness, etc Those who misappropriate the property of others and do not make gifts to anybody, cannot earn money even with great effort Those
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who give stolen wealth to others at first become rich but are afterwards reduced to poverty Those who acquire wealth by honest means but do not give it to anybody, get wealth with great effort Those who do not steal wealth but are very charitable, obtain wealth which cannot be destroyed by theft, etc Those who offer food daily are long lived endowed with beauty, strength, intelligence, health and happiness Those who offer clothes become shy beautiful, pure, and obtain clothes Those who offer houses or shelters obtain palaces full of wealth Those who offer carriages, palanquins, shoes, etc , always become happy and get the most comfortable conveyances Those who dig wells, tanks, etc , and thus provide water to the public, always become free from suffering and are not troubled with thirst Those who offer gardens are worshipped with various kinds of flowers and become wealthy and beautiful Those who make a gift of their learning by imparting it to others can easily acquire learning Those who offer medicine always become free from disease Those who offer lights acquire knowledge Those who offer beds and seats always enjoy happiness Those who offer milch cows become long-lived and are endowed with strength, beauty, etc Those who make gifts of daughters to suitable bridegrooms obtain whatever they desire Those who offer land obtain wealth, crops etc Those who do not commit

adultery but whose mind is inclined towards the wives of others will be reborn as females. Those women who hate women, who are pious and not licentious and always pray for manhood, are reborn as men. Those who always abuse others and are liars, are reborn as hunch-backs and dwarfs. Those who are dull in intelligence and full of malice are reborn as deaf men. Those who do not distinguish between good and bad are reborn as fools (J P T S, 1884, pp 158-160). Those who do not seek their own personal happiness, who are not elated by depriving others of their happiness, become the best of

Merits that lead to
the different grades
of heaven

grahas (planets) and mahārājās. Those who revere their parents, who are charitable and who

are ready to pardon others, who do not find delight in quarrels are reborn in the Tāvātimsa heaven. Those who are not fond of fights and dissensions, etc., and always do good deeds, go to Yāmaloka. Those who are endowed with much knowledge of the sacred lore (bṛhussutas), and are dhamma-dharas, wise, aspire to salvation, and always find delight in good things, go to Tusita heaven. Those who offer precepts to others and themselves observe them, are aident to do good deeds, go to the Nimmānarati heaven. Those who are energetic and active, controlled and restrained, go to the Paranimmitavasavattī heaven. By observing precepts a person goes to heaven, by meditation

who give stolen wealth to others at first become rich but are afterwards reduced to poverty. Those who acquire wealth by honest means but do not give it to anybody, get wealth with great effort. Those who do not steal wealth but are very charitable, obtain wealth which cannot be destroyed by theft, etc. Those who offer food daily are long-lived, endowed with beauty, strength, intelligence, health and happiness. Those who offer clothes become shy, beautiful, pure, and obtain clothes. Those who offer houses or shelters obtain palaces full of wealth. Those who offer carriages, palanquins, shoes, etc., always become happy and get the most comfortable conveyances. Those who dig wells, tanks, etc., and thus provide water to the public, always become free from suffering and are not troubled with thirst. Those who offer gardens are worshipped with various kinds of flowers and become wealthy and beautiful. Those who make a gift of their learning by imparting it to others can easily acquire learning. Those who offer medicine always become free from disease. Those who offer lights acquire knowledge. Those who offer beds and seats always enjoy happiness. Those who offer milch cows become long-lived and are endowed with strength, beauty, etc. Those who make gifts of daughters to suitable bridegrooms obtain whatever they desire. Those who offer land obtain wealth, crops etc. Those who do not commit

adultery but whose mind is inclined towards the wives of others will be reborn as females. Those women who hate women, who are pious and not licentious and always pray for manhood, are reborn as men. Those who always abuse others and are liars, are reborn as hunch-backs and dwarfs. Those who are dull in intelligence and full of malice are reborn as deaf men. Those who do not distinguish between good and bad are reborn as fools (J.P.T.S., 1884, pp. 158-160). Those who do not seek their own personal happiness, who are not elated by depriving others of their

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Those who revere their parents,

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are ready to pardon others, who do not find delight in quarrels are reborn in the Tāvātīśa heaven. Those who are not fond of fights and dissensions, etc., and always do good deeds, go to Yāmaloka. Those who are endowed with much knowledge of the sacred lore (bahussutas), and are dhamma-dharas, wise, aspire to salvation, and always find delight in good things, go to Tusita heaven. Those who offer precepts to others and themselves observe them, are ardent to do good deeds, go to the Nimmānarati heaven. Those who are energetic and active, controlled and restrained, go to the Paranimmitavasavattī heaven. By observing precepts a person goes to heaven, by meditation

one goes to Brahmāloka and by true knowledge one obtains Nirvāṇa (Ibid , p 160)

We read in the Anguttara Nikāya that a Bhikkhu named Tissa was reborn after death in the

Instances of persons
attaining various
grades of the
heavens according
to their deeds

Brahmāloka and was known there

as Tissa Brahmā and it is said

that he was endowed with mira-

culous power, and possessed great

influence (Anguttara Nikāya, Vol III p 332)

Buddhaghosa points out in the Sumangala

vilāsini that King Bimbisāra of Magadha was

after death reborn in the Cātummahārājika heaven

as a companion of Vessavana under the name of

Janavasabha (Vol I , p 137) The Manoratha

purāṇī, a commentary on the Anguttara Nikāya

by Buddhaghosa, also relates a story about a

person who visited heaven A person named

Damila went to heaven after worshipping ākāśacā-

tya (i.e. the cātya erected by Indra in the sky

on the hair of the Bodhisatta cut off on the bank

of the river Anomā) A certain person obtained

heaven as the reward of his offering a piece of cloth

to a young Bhikkhu Those persons in heaven

who cannot remember the meritorious deeds done

by them while on earth, are reminded of them

by the devadūtas In case the devadūtas fail

to do this, Yama makes them remember the

meritorious deeds done by them while on earth

Once a minister worshipped a mahācātya and

offered the merit of this act to Yama but he had

to go to hell because of some misdeeds done by him. He was brought before Yama by the devadūtas. Yama asked him whether he had accumulated any merit on earth but he could not recollect anything. Yama asked him whether he could remember having worshipped the mahācaitya, this he remembered and went to heaven. Had Yama not made him recall his deeds of merit and if he could not find anything of merit done by that person, Yama would have been very sorry, as the man would have suffered much in hell (Manorathapurāṇī, Sinhalese edition, p. 207).

The Dhammapada Commentary which, in our view, was compiled by

Further instances
from Buddha
ghosa's Dhamma
pada commentary

Buddhaghosa, relates some stories about the heavens like those narrated in the Petavatthu

Commentary. There is a reference to Mahākassapa absorbed in nirodhasamāpatti. On the seventh day he got up from the samāpatti and went out for alms. A woman guarding a paddy field, offered to Mahākassapa the fried rice which she was taking for her husband. Owing to this meritorious deed, she was reborn in the Tāvātimsa heaven in a golden mansion extending over 30 yojanas (Vol III, pp. 6-7).

A devatā living on the gate of Anāthapīṇḍika's house, warned the setthi that he should not make such profuse gifts to the Buddhist Saṃgha, as he would thereby run the risk of becoming poorer day by

day The setthi did not listen to his words and the devatā was deprived of his abode because of his envy towards the Buddha The devatā in vain sought refuge in the heaven of the four mahārājās and then of Śakka who asked him to return to the setthi and get his pardon by securing for him the lost treasure (Vol III, pp 10, 11, 12, and 13) A banker named Kukkutamitta offered himself with his family and all the wealth he had, to the service of a dagoba containing Kassapa Buddha's relics As a result Kukkutamitta and the sixteen members of his family were reborn in heaven (Vol III, pp 24-30) Once a son of the king of Benares took a vow that he would worship a tree god dwelling on a nigrodha tree by sacrificing before him 100 rājās of Jambudīpa with their chief queens On his succession to the throne of his father, he went to worship the tree god with all the rājās and their chief queens except Dinnā, chief queen of Uggasena, as she was in an advanced stage of pregnancy at that time The tree god seemed disinclined to accept the offering of the king as Dinnā was not brought The king brought Dinnā before the god but he refrained from killing so many human beings, after being instructed by her with regard to the baneful effect of such deeds on one's claim to go to heaven (Vol II, pp 14-17) In the past a sāmanera named Suka was born as a devaputta for offering food to a pīṭheekabuddha (Vol III, pp 94-95) Mallikā, queen

of King Pasenadi of Kosala, committed adultery only once but she concealed the offence by telling lies to the King. She repented and died. After death she suffered in the Avīci hell for seven days but on account of the great merit which she had accumulated by her good deeds during her life time, she was reborn as a goddess in the Tusita heaven. (D.C., Vol. III., pp. 119-21). From the *Anāthapiṇḍikaputtakālavatthu* we learn that the fruition of the first stage of sanctification is superior to heaven. (D.C., Vol. III., p. 191). Nandiya was a faithful upāsaka of the Buddha. He used to make good offerings to the bhikkhusaṃgha, to the poor and the destitute. A well-furnished ārāma was offered by him to the Buddha and his disciples. In consequence of this he was reborn after death in a golden palace full of seven kinds of gems in the Tāvatisa heaven. (D.C., Vol. III., pp. 290-291). Rohiṇī, sister of Anuruddha, had to suffer for some time from a skin disease on account of her sin but on the advice of Anuruddha, she built a hall for the bhikkhus and used to sweep its floor every day. In consequence of this merit, she was cured of her disease and after death was reborn in the Tāvatisa heaven. Afterwards she became a wife of Sakka. (D.C., Vol. III., pp. 295-297). Ubbarī, a king's daughter, was reborn in the Brahmaloḥa on account of her attainment of the first stage of meditation but owing to some evil deeds done in her former

existence, she fell down from the Brahmāloka and in time she was reborn as a pig but she was again reborn as a paribbājikā at Rājagaha, but again she fell down from that stage and was reborn in the family of a banker as a result of the attainment of the first stage of meditation. In the thirteenth birth she attained arhatship after having obtained ordination in the teachings of the Buddha (D C Vol IV pp 46 47). A banker of Sāvattthi named Ingara in his former existence offered food to a preceṇabuddha. In consequence of this meritorious deed he was reborn seven times in heaven (D C, Vol IV, pp 77 foll).

The Abhidhammattha Saṅgaha, a later compendium, describes the popular cosmography of the Buddhists in the following manner.

There are four Apāyābhūmis and seven Kāmasugatabhūmis which constitute

The popular Cosmo-
graphy as described
in the Abhidham-
mattha Saṅgaha

the Kāmaloka or Kāmāvacaraloka. The four apāyas are —

- 1 Niraya 2 Tiracchanayoni 3 Pettivīsaya
 - 4 Asurakāya
- The seven Kāmasugatabhūmis are —

- 1 Manussā 2 Catummahārājikā 3 Tavatimsā
 - 4 Yāmā 5 Tusitā 6 Nimmānarati 7 Paranimmitavāsavattī
- Higher than the Kāmaloka there is the Rūpaloka which is divided into sixteen lokas. Higher than the Rūpaloka there is the Arupaloka (Abhidhammattha Saṅgaha, Kosambī's Ed, Chap 5)

With regard to these worlds, the persons who are qualified to be reborn there as well as the period during which the gods can live in any particular world, we have an interesting statement in the Vibhaṅga. Here at first the gods are divided into three groups thus :—

“ There are three kinds of gods :—

1. Sammatidevā are devas who are admitted as such by all *e.g.* kings, queens, princes.

2. Uppattidevā are all gods commencing from the Cātummahārājika-devas up to the Akaniṭṭha-brahmadevas.

3. Visuddhidevas are all arahats.

The lease of life of the Cātummahārājikadevas is 90,00,000 years. It is to

The space of life
allowed to various
grades of gods.

be noted that 50 years in the human world are equal to one day and night in the Cātum-

mahārājika heaven. The lease of life of the Tāvātimsa gods is 3 koṭis and 60,00,000 years ; 100 years in the human world are equal to one day and night among these gods. The lease of life of the Yama gods is 14 koṭis and 40,00,000 years, 200 years in the human world are equal to one day and night among them. The lease of life of the Tusita gods is 57 koṭis and 60,00,000 years and 400 years in the human world are equal to one day and night among them. The lease of life of the Nimmānaratidevas is 203 koṭis and 40,00,000 years, 800 years in the human world

are equal to one day and night among them, the lease of life of the Paranimmitavasavattī devas is 021 kotis and 60,00,000 years, 1,600 years in the human world are equal to one day and night among these gods

Those who slightly meditate in the first stage of meditation (pathamajhāna) will be born among the Brahmapūrisajja gods. The lease of life of these gods is one third part of a kappa. Those who reach the midway of the first stage of meditation will be born among the Brahma purohita gods. Their lease of life is one half of a kappa. Those who meditate fully in the first stage of meditation will be born among Mahābrahmā gods and their lease of life is one kappa.

Those who slightly meditate in the second stage of meditation will be born among the Paritābha gods and their lease of life is two kappas. Those who reach midway in the second stage of meditation will be born among the Appamānābha gods and their lease of life is four kappas, those who fully meditate in the second stage of meditation will be born among Ābhassara gods and their lease of life is eight kappas. Those who slightly meditate in the third stage of meditation will be born among the Parittasubha gods and their lease of life is sixteen kappas, those who reach the midway in the third stage will be born among the Appamānasubha gods and their lease of life

thirty two kappas or kalpas, those who fully meditate in the third stage of meditation will be born among the Subhakinna gods and their lease of life, sixty four kalpas. Some of those who meditate in the fourth stage of meditation will be Asaññasattadevas, some will be born as Vehapphala gods, some Aviha gods, some Atappa gods, some Sudassa gods, some Sudassī gods, some Akanittha gods, some Ākāsañcāyatanūpaga gods, some Viññānañcāyatanūpaga gods, some Ākiñcaññāyatanūpaga gods and some Nevāsaññānasāññāyatanūpaga gods according to their different objects of meditation, different modes of thought, different inclinations different applications, different understanding and wisdom. The lease of life of Asaññasatta and Vehapphala gods is 500 kappas each. The lease of life of Aviha gods is 1,000 kalpas the lease of life of Atappa gods is 2,000 kalpas, the lease of life of Sudassa gods is 4 000 kalpas, the lease of life of Sudassī gods is 8,000 kalpas, the lease of life of Akanittha gods is 16,000 kalpas, the lease of life of Ākāsañcāyatanūpa gods is 20,000 kalpas, the lease of life of Viññānañcāyatanūpaga gods is 40,000 kalpas, the lease of life of Ākiñcaññāyatanūpaga gods is 60 000 kalpas and the lease of life of the Nevāsāññānasāññāyatanūpaga gods is 84 000 kalpas. (Vibhanga, P T S edition pp 422 426 cf also Anguttara Nikāya, Vol I pp 213 214, Ibid, Vol I pp 267 68)

The length of life of the gods is also enumerated in the *Abhidhammattha-Saṅgaha*. The lease of life of the *Cātummahārājika* gods is 90,00,000, that of the *Tāvātimsa* gods is four times longer than the *Cātummahārājika* gods, next higher gods live four times longer than the *Tāvātimsa* gods and so on up to the *Paranummitavasāvattī* gods. The lease of life of the *Brahmapūrisajja* gods is one-third of a kappa, that of the *Brahmapurohita* gods is half of a kappa, that of *Mahīrahma* is one kappa, that of the *Parittābhadevas* is two kappas, next higher gods live four kalpas and so on up to the *Subhakinna* gods. *Vehapphala* and *Asaññasatta* gods live 500 kalpas and the *Aviha* gods live 1,000 kalpas. *Atappā* gods live 2000 kalpas, *Sudassī* gods, 4,000 kalpas, *Sudessī* gods 8,000 kalpas and the *Akanittha* gods, 16,000 kalpas, *Ākāśānañcāyatanūpaga* gods, 20,000 kalpas, *Viññānañcāyatanūpaga* gods, 10,000 kalpas, *Ākīñcaññāyatanūpaga* gods, 60,000 kalpas and the *Nevasaññānasaññāyatanūpaga* gods, 84,000 kalpas (*Abhidhammattha-Saṅgaha*, *Kosambī's* Ed Chap 5).

In the earlier literature of the Pāli Buddhist Tripiṭaka also we have the similar enumeration of the length of life of the six-classes of the *Kāmāva* cara devas beginning from the *Cātummahārājika* devas to the *Paranummitavasāvattī* devas in the *Anguttara' Nikāya*, in a discourse delivered by the Buddha to *Visākhā*, the rich lady of *Śrāvastī*.

The ideas of the Sarvāstivādin school about the situation and extent of the heavens and the life period of the gods have been compiled by Prof. Louis de la Vallée Poussin from the *Abhidharmakosavyā-khyā*, a commentary on the

Prof. Poussin's note on the ideas of the Sarvāstivādin School re the situation and extent of the heavens and the life period of the gods

Abhidharmakosa of Vasuvandhu. We are greatly thankful to Dr. Poussin for his valuable note which is given below.

“Heavens of the concupiscence world (*kāmadhātu*)—

(a) On the fourth terrace of Meru is the retinue of the Four Great Kings (*cāturmahārājakāyikas*, *caturmahārājikas*), 80,000 in all (?) and (higher up, if we are to believe Digha, 1. 216) the Four Great Kings, rulers of the cardinal points. These are the first beings who regularly receive the name of ‘gods,’ and are classed as such. The length of their life is five hundred years, a day being equal to fifty human years, and their height is one fourth *krosa* ($\frac{1}{8}$ *yojana*, ‘league’). Perhaps the numerous servants and courtiers of the Great Kings, the Gandharvas, ‘celestial musicians,’ etc., although they are not devas, ought to be regarded as belonging to this category.

Half way up Meru are the chariots of the sun (51 leagues), of the moon (a league further down), and of the stars. These deities do not form a special class.

HEAVENS AS DESCRIBED IN NIKĀYAS 33

(f) 1,280,000 leagues above Jambudvīpa, 640,000 leagues broad, the abode of the 60,000 Paranirmitavaśavartins (paranirmita, and sometimes wrongly (?) pari), having Vaśavartin, 'the sovereign' as king (Dīgha, 1. 219). The name of these gods means 'rulers over the things created by others,' 'disposers of others' creations' (C.A.F. Rhys Davids' tr.), i.e. they themselves create or they cause others to create, the objects of enjoyment which they desire. Length of life, 160,000 years, one day=16,000 human years; height, $1\frac{1}{2}$ krośa.

(i) "First-Trance heavens—(1) Brahmapārśadyas (or kāyikas), retinue of Brahmā; length of life, 20 small ages of the world (20 antarakalpas = $\frac{1}{4}$ great kalpa): height, $\frac{1}{2}$ league. The heaven is situated 2,580,000 leagues above Jambudvīpa, and is 1,290,000 leagues broad. These numbers have to be doubled for the following heavens.

(ii) "Second-Trance Heavens—(1) Parittābhas ('Limited splendour'); length of life, 2 kalpas; height, 2 leagues. These figures are doubled for the next five classes. (2) Apramānābhas, 'Immeasurable splendour.' (3) Ābhāśvaras (Ābhassara), 'Radiant.'

(iii) Third-Trance Heavens (1) Parittaśubhas, 'limited beauty.' (2) Apramāṇaśubhas, 'immeasurable beauty.' (3) Subhakṛtsṇas (Subhakiṇṇa, wrongly Subbakiṇṇa), 'Complete beauty'; length of life, 64 kalpas, i.e. until the return of the

(b) On the summit of Meru are the gods 'who have the thirty-three at their head' (trāyastriṃśas, tāvatimsas), to the number of 100,000 (?), and, above them (according to Dīgha), is their King Sakra, devānam Inda 'the Indra of the gods' Their town, 'Lovely view' is 2,500 miles square and contains the Palace of Victory (Vaiṣṇavanta) [Majjhima, I 253, etc.] They live for 1,000 years, one day being equal to 100 human years (Dīgha, II, 327), and their height is $\frac{1}{2}$ krośa.

Then there are palaces which might be called aerial (vimāna)

(c) 100,000 leagues above Jambhūdvīpa, i.e. 80,000 above the thirty-three, and 80,000 leagues broad, the palace of the Yāma gods, whose king Suyāma, according to Dīgha, dwells higher up. Length of life, 2,000 years, one day = 200 human years; height, $\frac{3}{4}$ krośa.

(d) The abode of the Tusitas, 'satisfied' or 'blissful', the residence of a future Buddha before his last existence, king, Samtusita, length of life, 4,000 years, height, one krośa.

(e) The abode of the Nirmānaratis, 'who have their pleasure in creation,' 'happy creators', king, Sunirmita, 'well-built'. According to the A. K. V., the meaning of this name is 'enjoying self-created pleasures,' in contrast with the inferior gods, who enjoy objects which are presented to them on account of the deserts (of Itivuttaka, p. 94). Length of life, 8,000 years; height, $1\frac{1}{2}$ krośa.

(f) 1,280,000 leagues above Jambudvīpa, 640,000 leagues broad, the abode of the 60,000 Paranirmitavaśavartins (paranirmita, and sometimes wrongly (?) pari), having Vaśavartin, 'the sovereign' as king (Dīgha, 1. 219). The name of these gods means 'rulers over the things created by others,' 'disposers of others' creations' (C.A.F. Rhys Davids' tr.), i.e. they themselves create or they cause others to create, the objects of enjoyment which they desire. Length of life, 160,000 years, one day=16,000 human years; height, $1\frac{1}{2}$ krośa.

(i) "First-Trance heavens—(1) Brahmāpārśadyas (or kāyikas), retinue of Brahmā; length of life, 20 small ages of the world (20 antarakalpas = $\frac{1}{4}$ great kalpa): height, $\frac{1}{2}$ league. The heaven is situated 2,580,000 leagues above Jambudvīpa, and is 1,290,000 leagues broad. These numbers have to be doubled for the following heavens.

(ii) "Second-Trance Heavens—(1) Parīttābhas ('Limited splendour'); length of life, 2 kalpas; height, 2 leagues. These figures are doubled for the next five classes. (2) Apramāṇābhas, 'Inmeasurable splendour.' (3) Ābhūśvaras (Ābhassara), 'Radiant.'

(iii) Third-Trance Heavens (1) Parittaśubhas, 'limited beauty.' (2) Apramāṇaśubhas, 'immeasurable beauty.' (3) Subhakṛtsṇas (Subhakinha, wrongly Subhakinna), 'Complete beauty'; length of life, 64 kalpas, i.e. until the return of the

destruction of the cosmos by wind (see Ages of the World—(Buddhist), Vol. I., p. 188); height, 64 leagues.

(iv) "Fourth-Trance Heavens—(1) Anabhrakas ('Cloudless'), 125 kalpas and leagues (not 128, which would be double that of the Subhaktṛsnas); these numbers are doubled for the following classes.

(2) Punyaprasavas, 'Merit-born' (Tib. bsod-nams-skyes), or perhaps 'Merit-begetting' (?). (3) Brhatphalas (Vehapphalas), 'Abundant fruit.' (4)-(8) bear the generic name of *Suddhāvāsa*, 'Pure abode' whence *Suddhāvāsikas*, *Suddhāvāsakāyikas*, 'inhabitants of the Pure abodes'. (4) Avrhas (Avihas), 'Effortless,' (?) (5) Atapas (atappa = atāpya), 'No heat,' 'Cool gods.' (6) Sudṛśas (Sudassa), 'Beautiful.' (7) Sudarśana (Sudassin), 'well-seeing.' (8) Akanisthas, 'Sublime' (= 'not youngest,' 'not smallest'), also called (or subordinated to) Aghanisthas, at the end (nistha), of the compact (agha), i.e. 'at the top or the end of the material world'; length of life, 16,000 kalpas; height, 16,000 leagues.

"The total number of 'places' or 'stages' in the rūpa world, therefore, is

The total number of
'stages' in the rūpa
world

seventeen, according to the

" Abhidharmakośa, iii. 2; the

Kaśmīrians, suppress one of them. The Pāli tradition of Abhidharma counts only sixteen; it has neither the Anabhrakas nor the Punyaprasa-

vas, but it adds the *Asamjñasattvas* (devas, 'unconscious beings,' 'gods') as follows :

Fourth Trance—(1) *Asaññasattas*, (2) *Vehapphalas*, (3) Pure abodes, five in number. (In later documents, e. g. in the *Abhidhammatthasamgaha* V. 2-6, 10, tr. Warren, Buddhism, p. 289, the *Asaññasattas* come after the *Vehapphalas*; and the same arrangement occurs in Northern texts, viz. *Lalitavistara*, p. 150, *Dharmasaṅgraha*, 128, Beal p. 85 (according to *Dīrghāgama*?), which add the *Asamjñasattvas* to the list of the *Kośa*).

Lastly, certain sources place the heaven of *Mahāmaheśvara*, the Great Lord, *Śiva*, above the *Akaniṣṭhas*—a non-Buddhist idea borrowed from Hinduism." (Hastings, *Encyclopædia of Religion and Ethics*, Vol. IV, pp 134-136).

SECTION II

ILLUSTRATIVE STORIES FROM THE VIMĀNAVATTHU COMMENTARY

When the Buddha was residing at Sāvattthī
in the ārāma of Anāthapindika
Pīṭhavimāna. at Jetavana, King Pasenadi of

Kosala, for one week, made gifts on an immense scale, not to be compared with the charity practised by anybody in his kingdom and so it was known as asadisaḍāna (incomparable charity). To imitate this, Anāthapindika and Visākhā each made liberal gifts for three days. Their charities became known all over the Jambudīpa and following them, the people of Jambudīpa began to offer food, drink, seats, etc., to samanas, brāhmanas, the poor and the destitute. At that time a bhikkhu who was on his round for alms, reached a certain house at the time of breakfast. A daughter of that house was a great believer in the Buddha. She, out of great devotion, welcomed the bhikkhu and offered him a seat (a pīṭha, wooden stool) covered with a very nice cloth and when he was seated there at ease, offered him food and eventually the girl made a gift of that seat to the therā. In consequence of this meritorious deed, she after death was reborn in a golden vimāna or mansion which extended over 12 yojanas in the

Tāvatisa heaven and a thousand apsarases were appointed to attend on her. Besides, in consequence of her making a gift of a pīṭha to the bhikkhu, she was awarded, in the Tāvatisa heaven, a golden couch which could carry her through the heavens at a great speed. (Vimānavatthu commentary, pp. 5-6).

A woman of Sāvattī seeing a therā come to her house for alms, most gladly offered him a seat covered with a piece of blue cloth with the result that she obtained in heaven a vimāna made up of veluriya (*lapis lazuli*) which was a kind of gem of a dazzling blue colour like that of the neck of the peacock. In that vimāna she sped through the heavens, bright and shining like lightning. (Ibid, 26-27).

An arahant of Rājagaha, after having obtained alms, came to a house, the door of which was open, with the intention of sitting and eating his food there. A woman who was the mistress of the house, gladly welcomed him and gave him a pīṭha to sit on, covered with yellow cloth, praying that by this meritorious deed she might obtain a gold pīṭha. She told the therā while he was about to leave the house after he had finished his repast that she had presented the seat to him and he should take it away with him. The therā took it and offered it to the Saṅgha. The mistress of the house, after death, was reborn in the golden mansion of the Tāvatisa heaven and obtained

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Tāvātimsa heaven and a thousand apsaras were appointed to attend on her. Besides, in consequence of her making a gift of a pītha to the bhikkhu, she was awarded, in the Tāvātimsa heaven, a golden conch which could carry her through the heavens at a great speed (Vimānavatthu commentary, pp 5 6)

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a golden couch there (Vimānavatthu commen-
tary, pp 27 28)

When the Buddha was at Kālāṇḍalānīvāpa
at Veluvāna near Rājagaha, it
Kunjaravimāna was announced that a festival
would be held there The people of the city
began to sweep the streets decorate houses, each
according to the length of his purse The city
appeared to be beautiful like a city of the gods
King Bimbisāra came out of his palace with a
large retinue and a display of royal splendour
and marched with great pomp round the city
A daughter of a family of Rājagaha, moved at
the spectacle, enquired in her own mind what
merit had qualified the king for the acquisition
of so much wealth and power She asked the
learned about it and was told that "the effect
of dāna or gift is like the kappārukka (i.e. the
tree which fulfils every wish) or the cintāmani
that converts the baser metals into gold' Hearing
this, her mind was filled with an eager desire
to offer charity At that time her parents sent
her a pair of new cloth, a new tool and a pair of
lotus, clarified butter, honey, rice, sugar, etc
She on receipt of these articles was with a joyous
heart preparing to offer charity She prepared
rice gruel with honey and various kinds of food
and drink and decorated the place where the
bhikkhus would be given charity She prepared
seats there, covered with white cloth, decorating

the legs of the seats with blooming lotuses. After bathing herself, and putting on beautiful cloth, she sent her maid-servants to invite a bhikkhu who was going round for alms. The maid-servant saw Sāriputta and invited him to her house. The daughter with great devotion welcomed the therā, made him sit on the decorated seat and offered him the food already prepared by her. While offering charity, she prayed that by virtue of the merit acquired by her for this gift she might be blessed with celestial gifts including an elephant, a kūṭāgāra (pinnacled house), bed, etc. When the therā was going away after taking food, she presented him new clothes and sent men carrying a couch to the vihāra where he dwelt. In consequence of this merit, she after death, was reborn in the golden mansion of the Tāvātimsa heaven with a retinue of a thousand heavenly maidens (apsaras) and she saw there lotuses all around her. She also received a well-decorated elephant and golden couch. She used to go for a walk in the Nandanavana, seated on this celestial elephant. One day on her way to the vana, she met Moggallāna and being asked, related to him how she had acquired such celestial splendour. (Vimānavatthu commentary, p. 31 foll).

When the Buddha was at Sāvattthī, some
 sixteen bhikkhus spent the rainy
 season in a village hermitage.

They, in summer, set out for Sāvattthī filled with a desire to be blessed with a sight of the Master and to listen to the Dhamma from his own mouth. On the way they had to pass through a waterless desert. Tired with the heat and parched with thirst as they were trudging past a village they saw a woman going with a water pot to fetch water from a well. They followed the woman with the hope of finding water. They sat in a place a little away from the spot where the woman was drawing water. When the woman had filled the pitchers, the bhikkhus attracted her attention and thinking that they must be suffering from thirst, out of great devotion she offered water to them which they took from her in a pot, they slaked their thirst and cooled themselves by washing their hands and expressed their appreciation of the offering of water by the woman. She, after death, was reborn in the Tāvātimsa heaven by virtue of that merit and there got a vimāna with a kapparakkha. A beautiful streamlet with cold water was flowing through the garden. On both sides of the streamlet there were big ponds full of lotuses of five colours and there were golden boats. The Goddess used to sport in the boat and was met by Mahāmoggallāna whom she told how she was born in that vimāna. (Vimānavatthu commentary, pp. 40-41)

When the Lord was residing at Sāvattthī, a therā free from sins, came out of the city with

the intention of passing the *vassa* at a village hermitage. But tired and thirsty, he could not reach that village but came to another hamlet on the way. Finding no shady place or water outside the village, he entered it and stood before the gate of a house. A woman of the house, noticing him invited him to enter the house and finding him tired and thirsty offered him a seat and brought him water to wash his feet with and also oil to rub them with. Shortly afterwards she brought a well-scented cold drink for him. The *thera* after cooling himself with the drink, left her after approving her offering. She, after death, was reborn in the *Tāvatiṃsa* heaven and was blessed with the same joys as the lady mentioned in the preceding story. (*Vimānavatthu* commentary, p. 44).

Once the Buddha, on his tour through the Kosala country, went to a brahmin village named *Thūṇa*. The Brahmins were not well-disposed towards the Buddha and were very envious. They feared that if the Buddha came and resided in their village for two or three days, he would convert all the villagers to his faith and in that case Brahmanism would disappear from that spot and so they tried various ways to prevent the Buddha's advent. They removed all the boats on the river and destroyed the bridge so that he might not cross over to their place. More-

over, they filled all the wells with earth and grass so that the Buddha and his disciples might not get water to drink. The Buddha felt in his heart pity for them, the erring Brāhmanas, and went to the Brahmin village through the sky and sat at the foot of a tree. Many females were going past him to fetch water. The villagers were instructed not to give water or anything else to samana Gotama and his disciples. Among the females going to fetch water, there was a servant girl of a Brahmin, she thought that it was an opportune moment for her to liberate herself from slavery, and careless whether the Brahmins would beat her or even kill her, she offered a pot of water to the Buddha who drank water from it and by his miraculous power the pitcher became full every time its contents were exhausted, so that the disciples quenched their thirst from it. The Buddha in order to increase her faith in him showed that a pot of water given by her was sufficient to quench the thirst of the Buddha and his disciples and he returned the pot full of water to her. The Brahmin master heard all about it and was very angry with her and beat her to death. She, after death, was reborn in the Tāvātimsa heaven and was given the other objects of heavenly enjoyment as in the two preceding cases (Vimānavatthu commentary, pp. 45-47)

On a sabbath day many lay devotees—upāsakas

Dīpavimāna.

and upāsikas—in the forenoon offered various kinds of charity including food and drink and in the afternoon taking various kinds of scents and garlands, went to a vihāra to pay their respects to the worthy bhikkhus. After finishing the worship, they sat down to hear the sermon till dusk. An upāsikā, finding that it was dark, brought a light before the preacher's seat. In consequence of this merit, she with joy in her mind went home and sometime after died and was reborn in the Tāvātimsa heaven in Jotirasavimāna. The splendour of the body of this goddess was much brighter than that of others, by virtue of the merit she had acquired by presenting a light. She related her past story to Mahāmoggallāna, when asked. (Vimānavatthu commentary pp. 50-51).

While the Buddha was at Sāvattihī, a pregnant woman of Rājagaha being desirous of getting pure tila (sesamum) oil, placed tila seeds to dry in the rays of the sun after washing them carefully. Her life-period (āyu) had come to an end that very day and she was destined to fall into hell after death. Early in the morning the Buddha while visualising the earth in his meditation saw this and moved by pity to save her from hell, came to her to accept an offering of tila. The woman seeing the Buddha before her, was filled with delight, saluted him and finding nothing

Tiladakkhnavimāna

else with which he could make a suitable offering to the Exalted One, collected the sesamum seeds took them in her joined palms and made a present of them to the Buddha who blessed her that she would be happy. She died at dawn and was reborn in a golden vimāna in the Tāvātimsa heaven. The goddess related to Mahāmoggallāna her past history when asked. (V. commy. p. 54).

When the Buddha was at Sāvattihī, there was
 Patubbatāvīmāna a woman, very faithful and
 obedient to her husband. She
 was patient and was not subject to anger. She
 never used harsh words even when she was irritated,
 was truthful and had faith in the Buddha. She
 used to make offerings according to her means.
 After death, she was reborn in the Tāvātimsa
 heaven. Her palace or vimāna was adorned
 with things of beauty and joy and she was surround-
 ed by an atmosphere of refinement. There was
 the Koñca or Krañca, the bird whose constancy
 in love for the mate is celebrated by poets; there
 were the swans of heavenly form and the cuckoo
 with its sweet coo; the vimāna was full of flowers
 on every side, decorated with beautiful objects
 and full of men and women. She reigned there
 as a goddess, surrounded by apsaras who danced
 and sang and made themselves beautiful in every
 way. She emitted an effulgent light and her
 complexion threw a halo of light around.

She related her past history to Mahāmoggallāna, when asked, in the following words:—

“I in my human life was always devoted to my husband and used to protect him as a mother protects her son. I never used harsh words although I had occasion to be angry. I was truthful, charitable, and observer of precepts. On account of these I have got such beauty and wealth.” (Vimānavatthu commy, pp. 56-57).

A similar story is told of another lady, also hailing from Sāvattthī, who too was loyal at heart to her husband and made gifts as far as she could; she also, after death, was rewarded with a vimāna like the one described above.

At Sāvattthī, an arahat came to a house for alms. The daughter-in-law of the family seeing the arahat, was filled with joy and ardour, and with great devotion offered some portion of the cakes which she had got for her own use. The therā accepted the offering and went away blessing her. In consequence of the merit acquired, she, after death, was reborn in the Tāvātimsa heaven. (Vimānavatthu commentary, p. 61).

When the Buddha was at Kalandakanivāpa at Veluvana near Rājagaha, a poor man named Punna was the servant of a banker of Rājagaha. Punna had only two members in his family, his wife and his daughter both of whom bore the name of

Sunissāvīmāna

Uttarāvīmāna.

Uttarā At that time a festival known as the Nakkhattakīlam was announced to be held for a week by the people of the town. The banker asked Punna whether he would take part in the festivities or work in his house. He replied that nakkhattakīlam was for the rich and he being a poor man would not be able to participate in the sports. He prayed that if he could get bulls, he would go to the field with them to cultivate it. He was given two strong bulls by his master and with them he went to plough the field. Before going to his hard work he asked his wife to cook double the usual quantity of rice and to take it to the field. At that time as the therā Sāriputta rose up from meditation after a week, looking for some person whom he could bring to the true faith, he saw Punna to be the fit person to whom he should pay his first visit. Punna, as soon as he saw Sāriputta, welcomed him cordially, stopped his work and thinking that the gift of a toothbrush would bring him wealth, gave him a toothbrush and also some water for ablution. The therā then went towards the town and met Punna's wife as she was bringing food which she offered to Sāriputta, although the food she was bringing was intended for her husband who would be very hungry at that time on account of his hard work in the field. Sāriputta would accept only half the food offered but the woman desirous of accumulating some merit for the next world, begged

him to accept the whole of it Sāriputta did so and left his blessings with her Punna's wife then returned home and again cooked rice for her husband who had become very hungry and was sitting at the foot of a tree eagerly expecting the cooked rice She came to her husband with food and explaining to him the cause of the delay, prayed to be excused for having kept him waiting so long Punna, hearing this, was satisfied and laid himself down to sleep with his head on her lap After rising from sleep Punna could hardly believe his eyes when he saw the cultivated field full of gold He and his wife realised that they had received gold through the influence of the thera Sāriputta They took some gold to the king and related the whole matter to him The king sent carts with officers to bring the gold to his treasury but as soon as the gold was put into the cart, it turned into earth The officers related the matter to the king who realised that the wealth being the reward for the good deeds of the poor family, could be enjoyed by them alone and accordingly ordered his officers to take the gold on behalf of Punna. The gold was brought into the palace, and piled up there The king invited the people to look at it and as it made Punna the richest man in the whole city, he was made the nagarasetthu with the name Bahudhanasetthu Punna made plentiful gifts to the Buddha and the congregation on the occasion of his being installed

as setthi and his entrance into the new palace. Punna and his wife attained the first stage of sanctification by their meritorious deeds.

Punna's daughter Uttarā was married to the son of the banker whom Punna had served before. Punna's daughter was not happy in the house of her father in law who was a false believer and she had no opportunity of making any gifts to the bhikkhus and the congregation. She informed her father of her difficulty. Punna sent a large sum of money to Uttarā who allowed her husband to spend a portion of it to enjoy the company of the courtesan, Sīrīmā, for a fortnight, and during this period she was freed from restraint and could offer charity to the Buddha and his disciples and listen to the Buddha's sermons. The Buddha with his disciples came there and held a religious discourse and Uttarā after listening to it, attained the second stage of sanctification while her husband, father in law, mother in law and Sīrīmā with five hundred ganikās who had thus an opportunity of listening to the discourses of the Master, attained the first stage. Shortly afterwards, Uttarā died and was reborn in the Tāvātimsa heaven where she related to Mahāmoggallāna the events of her past life, when asked (Vimānavatthu commentary, pp 62-74)

When the Buddha was at Kalandakanivāpa
 in Veluvana near Rājagaha,
 Sīrīmā returned home after

attaining the first stage of sanctification. In order to rid herself of sins, she used to offer alms to eight bhikkhus daily and every day she used to spend sixteen kahāpanas on works of charity. One day a bhikkhu accepted her offerings. As soon as he left, Sīrīmā fell ill and died. After death she was reborn as a celestial nymph who came to worship the Buddha with five hundred female attendants (Vimānavatthu commentary, p. 75 foll.).

When the Buddha was residing at Isipatana in Benares, some bhikkhus were going for alms by the gate of a Brahmin's house. A daughter of the brahmin named Kesakārī was picking up vermins from the head of her mother. The daughter seeing the bhikkhus asked her mother why they had renounced the world at an early age. The mother replied that they had done so after listening to the discourses of the Buddha. A lay disciple of the Buddha who was then passing by, heard the conversation, and explained to them the precepts of the Buddhist faith including the three refuges, the five precepts and the thirty-two impurities. The girl was attracted by these teachings and meditating on those impurities, attained the first stage and after death was reborn as an attendant of Sakka who when asked related the events of her past life. (Vimānavatthu commentary, pp. 86-89).

When the Buddha was at Jetavana at Sāvattihī
 a lay disciple went to
 Dasivimāṇa Jetavana in the evening and
 told the Buddha that from the next day he would
 offer charity to four bhikkhus daily. The Buddha
 having expressed his approval, arrangements
 were made in his house to offer charities daily
 to four bhikkhus and his maid servant was ordered
 to attend on the four bhikkhus daily, to prepare
 seats for them and supply water and other necessary
 things. The maid servant served the bhikkhus
 with hearty devotion and observed the precepts
 of the true dhamma and meditated on the thirty
 two impurities for sixteen years, as a result of
 which she was reborn after death as one of the
 beloved attendants of Sakka. (Vimānavatthu
 commentary pp 91-92)

When the Lord was staying at Benares, there
 lived near one of the gates
 Lakhumavimāṇa called the Kevattadvāra, a
 woman called Lakhumā. As the bhikkhus entered
 the town by that gate, she offered a spoonful of rice
 to the bhikkhus and thenceforth she imbibed
 the habit of offering charity and she used to
 prepare seats and supply water to the bhikkhus
 in the āsanāsālā (rest house). She was established
 in sotāpatti and after death was reborn in the
 Tāvātimsa heaven. (Vimānavatthu commentary,
 pp 97-98)

When the Buddha was at Kalandakanivāpa

at Veluvana, near Rājagaha
 Acāmadayikavimāna. plague broke out in a family
 at Rājagaha and all the members died except
 one woman who fled from the house with her life
 Helpless she took shelter behind a house the
 inmates of which gave her the remnants of their
 food including ācāma (scum of boiling rice) At
 that time Mahākassapa rising up from meditation,
 was moved by pity at the miserable plight of
 the woman and wishing to free her from the misery,
 he thought of giving her an opportunity of doing
 good deeds Accordingly, the sage went to her
 and asked for alms and she offered him the ācāma
 When approving her offering, he informed her
 that she had been his mother in the third previous
 existence She died and was reborn among the
 Nimmānaratidevas (Vimānavatthu commentary,
 pp 100 101)

When the Buddha was at Rājagaha, he came
 Candali vimāna to know by meditation that a
 candali whose death was very near, would fall
 into hell after death Moved with pity to save
 her from the impending disaster, he went out
 for alms with a large gathering of bhikkhus and
 was passing by the spot where the candālī was
 The candālī who was at that time walking with
 a stick seeing the Exalted One coming, stood by,
 looking towards him He also, as if to prevent
 her proceeding on her way, stood in front of her
 and the sage Mahāmoggallāna exhorted the candālī

to fall down at the feet of the Buddha and worship him in order to save herself from falling into hell, as her life was about to end. She with great devotion worshipped the Buddha who then left her for the town. The candālī was killed by a cow and after death she was reborn in the Tāvātimsa heaven (Vimānavatthu commentary, pp 105 107)

When the Buddha was at Jetavana at Sāvattthī, there lived in the town of
Bhadditthivimāna
Kimhila, a householder's son named Rohaka who was a believer in the Buddha, and there was, in another family of equal status, in the same town, a girl, mild, gentle and devoted who, on account of her merits, was called Bhaddī. Rohaka married the girl Bhaddā who, on account of her good conduct, came to be known in that town as Bhadditthī or the gentle dame. At that time two of the most prominent among the disciples of the Buddha, in the course of their tour, came to the town of Kimhila. Rohaka invited the two disciples with their followers, offered them good food and drink and various other things and in company with his wife served them in every way and listening to their discourses, embraced the faith and received the five *sīlas*. Since then Bhaddā used to observe the Uposatha on the 8th, 14th and 15th day of every half month. On account of her piety, the gods used to help her and they even freed her from calumny. She

after death was reborn in the Tāvatisa heaven and she worshipped the Buddha when the Master went to the Tāvatisa heaven (Vimānavatthu commentary, pp. 109-110).

When the Exalted One was at Sāvattthī, at
Sonadinnāvimāna Nālandā, there was a devoted
 upāsikā named Sonadinnā who
 always used to serve the bhikkhus with the four
 requisites and also used to observe the precept
 and the uposatha with perfect regularity. She
 attained sotāpatti meditating on the four noble
 truths. She, after death, was reborn in the
 Tāvatisa heaven. (Vimānavatthu commentary,
 p. 115).

Uposatha, a devoted Upāsikā, in the city of
Uposathavimāna Sāketa, used to observe like
 the lady in the above story,
 all the precepts, offered the four requisites to the
 bhikkhus and meditated on the four noble truths
 and thus attained sotāpatti. She after death
 was reborn in the Tāvatisa heaven. (Vimāna-
 vatthu commentary, p. 115).

Exactly similar accounts are given of the two
 ladies of Rājagaha, Niddā and Suniddā who on
 account of their good conduct, were reborn in
 the Tāvatisa heaven after their death.

When the Buddha was at Sāvattthī, a woman
 of Uttaramadhurā was at the
Bhikkhādāyikavimāna. end of her life-term and was
 about to fall into hell. Buddha seeing her miserable

plight, took pity on her and came to save her. In the forenoon, Buddha proceeded towards her house for alms. The woman who was at that time coming with a pitcher of water, saw the Buddha and asked him whether he had received alms. The Buddha replied "I shall get it." She invited the Buddha to have his daily meal at her house. She gave a seat to the Buddha and fed him to his satisfaction with her own hands. She, after death, was reborn in the Tāvātimsa heaven (Vimānavatthu commentary, pp 118-119).

When the Buddha was at Veluvana, a girl of the family that supported Uḷaravimāna Mahāmoggallāna's, was in the habit of offering charity to the bhikkhus. She used to give away in charity half the portion of the food that she received for herself and she never ate anything without giving a portion of it to others. Her mother used to give her double the quantity of food she would require for her own use in order to enable her to practise charity to her heart's content. The girl, when she grew up, was married to a young man of a family of false-believers. One day Mahāmoggallāna came and stood in front of her house in the course of his begging tour from house to house. The girl invited him to her house and offered him the cake which was reserved for her mother-in-law who, when she came to learn of it, grew angry.

and struck her on her shoulder. The girl died and after death was reborn in the Tāvātimsa heaven. (Vimānavatthu commentary, pp. 120-121).

The details of this vimāna are the same as those of the previous story except that the girl gave in charity to Mahāmoggallāna a piece of sugarcane reserved for her mother-in-law. (Vimānavatthu commentary, p. 124.)

A daughter of an upāsaka at Sāvattthī was married to a member of another family of equal 'status. She was virtuous, free from anger, devoted to her husband and an observer of the sabbath. After death she was reborn in the Tāvātimsa heaven. (Vimānavatthu commentary, p. 128.)

While the Buddha was residing at Jetavana at Sāvattthī, an upāsaka of the city had a daughter named Latā who was learned, wise and intelligent. After marriage, she went to her father-in-law's house where she was faithful to her husband, and obedient to her father-in-law and mother-in-law and always used to speak sweet words to all the members of the family. She pleased every one in the family with food and drink, was capable of managing household affairs and also the property, was pious and free from anger, and was in the habit of giving charity and observing sabbath.

She, after death, was reborn as a daughter of Vessavana Kuvera named Lata and had four other sisters, Sajjā, Pavarā, Acchumatī and Suta. All these five sisters were appointed dancing girls by Sakka. They afterwards grew jealous of each other and prayed to Vessavana to judge who amongst them was the most accomplished in the arts of dancing and music. Their father asked them to sing and dance in the assembly of the gods on the bank of the Anotatta lake. Latā was declared to be the best amongst the sisters (Vimānavatthu commentary, pp. 131-132).

In very ancient times when Brahmadatta was reigning at Benares, the Bodhisatta was born there in the family of a musician.

Guttavimāna

He was perfect in the art of music, became the chief musician in the Jambudīpa and was known as Guttala on account of his sweet voice. His parents were old and blind. Hearing of his great renown, a musician named Mūsala came to him from Ujjayinī to have lessons in the art of music from him. Guttala refused to take him as a pupil, noticing in his appearance marks of a wicked and ungrateful person. Mūsala, however, served Guttala's parents to their satisfaction and at last at the request of his parents, Guttala was persuaded to teach Mūsala and he taught the man all the secrets of the art without keeping back anything. Mūsala after acquiring the art from him, thought of defeating his teacher

and with this end in view, he went to the King of Benares and demonstrated his skill in music. But it is to be noted that Guttīla was the chief court musician of the king of Benares. Mūsīla requested the king to appoint him as one of his musicians. The king agreed to appoint him on half the salary of Guttīla. Mūsīla, however, urged that he was in no way inferior to his teacher and demanded an equal salary. The king was requested to examine their skill in music and there was a competition in which Guttīla with the help of Sakka proved to be superior. In the previous birth Sakka was a pupil of Guttīla and he came to the assistance of his teacher who became victorious with his help and was requested to go to heaven, to give a performance of his skill in music before the gods. In Indra's Court he saw thirty two heavenly nymphs possessing splendour greater than that of the other gods, and on account of various kinds of charity e.g. the offering of cloth, garland, perfume, fruit, sugarcane, etc., these nymphs had become liberated from earthly life. In heaven Guttīla urged that he would not play on the *vīṇā* there without suitable remuneration and when asked what would satisfy him, he prayed that all those bright goddesses would recount to him the good deeds that had brought them to the heavenly regions. (Vimānavatthu commentary, pp 137-148)

When the Buddha was at Jetavana at Sāvattthī
Daddalhavimāna
at Nālakagāma, one of the
families that supported Revata
had two daughters named Bhaddā and Subhaddā
Bhaddā went to her (Bhaddā's) husband's house
She was faithful and intelligent but barren She
requested her husband to marry her sister, a son
by whom would be just like a son born of herself,
and the family line would be continued thereby.
Persuaded by her, the husband married Subhaddā
who was always instructed by Bhaddā to offer
charity, to observe the precepts and to perform
other meritorious deeds diligently; so that, in
consequence of this, Subhaddā would be happy
in this world and in the next Subhaddā acted
according to her sister's advice and one day invited
Revata The therā however, in order to secure
comparatively great blessings for her, took it as
an invitation to the Saṃgha and went to her house
accompanied by eleven other bhikkhus and Subhad
dā offered good food and drink to them The
therā approved of her charity and as a result of
feeding the Saṃgha, she, after death, was reborn
in the Nimmānarati heaven When in heaven
she looked for her sister who had made greater
gifts than herself and found her in an inferior
position, reborn as an attendant at the court of
Sakka She enquired about the reason of this
difference in their respective position and learnt
that Bhaddā had offered charity to individual

bhikkhus and not to the Saṅgha, as had been done by herself and in consequence she was reborn as a nymph in Sakka's Court. (Vimānavatthu commentary, pp. 149-156).

When the Buddha was at Jetavana at Sāvattthī,
there was at Nālakagāma in
the country of Magadha, in the
family of a householder, a daughter-in-law named
Pesavatī. In a former birth when she was a
young girl, she had once gone with her mother
to a place where a stūpa was being built over the
relic of Kassapa Buddha. There she had seen
golden bricks being made and had offered her
gold ornaments to be utilised for the erection
of the stūpa. In consequence of this meritorious
deed, after death, she was reborn in the devaloka
and from that devaloka, she was reborn in the
family of a householder at Nālakagāma at the
time of the present Buddha. When twelve years
old, she was sent by her mother to a shop to buy
oil. She saw the son of the shop-keeper taking
out his hidden treasure and throwing it away.
Sinful as he was, he could not appreciate the
value of the treasure which appeared to him to be
worthless stone but she being virtuous recognised
the true worth of the treasure and she asked the
shopkeeper why the treasure was being thrown
away. The shopkeeper, thinking that she was
virtuous and that if he could marry his son to
her, his hidden treasure might be saved, went

After the Buddha's parinibbāna, King Ajāta-

Visālakkhīvimāna

sattu erected a stūpa over the
relic of the Buddha that fell

to his share. A daughter of a garland-maker
of Rājagaha, Sunindā by name, daily used to
send to the stūpa garlands, perfumes, fruits,
flowers, etc., for the worship of the relic and on
the uposatha day, she used to offer worship herself
with her own hands at the stūpa. After death,
she was reborn as an attendant of Sakka, who,
on one occasion, addressed her as Visālakkhī
(Vimānavatthu commentary, pp 169-170)

When the Buddha was at Sāvattthī, an upāsaka

Paricchattakavimāna

of the city invited the Buddha
to his house and in front of the

gate of his residence, he erected a beautiful pandal,
and prepared nice and costly seats for the Buddha
and his disciples. He offered excellent food,
drink, garlands and perfumes to the Buddha.
At that time a woman went to collect fire wood
at Andhavana and while returning home, with
a large bundle of asoka twigs, with young leaves
and beautiful flowers on them, she saw the Buddha
seated in the pandal and worshipped him with
asoka flowers brought from that forest. She
twice went round the Buddha to show her respect
towards him, then bowed and went her way. In
consequence of this meritorious deed, she, after
death, was reborn in the Tāvātimsa heaven having
a thousand apsaras to attend on her and passed

to the parents of the girl and sought the hand of the girl for his son. She was then married to the shopkeeper's son and the shopkeeper made her the mistress of the house, placed her in charge of the treasure vault and called her Pesavatī. Her virtues enabled them to enjoy the rich treasure there. At that time Sāriputta obtained parinibbāna at Nālakagāma. Pesavatī showed her respect to the dead body of Sāriputta by worshipping it with sweet scents, flowers, etc. In the crowd assembled there, a great panic was created by the royal elephant having run amok and in the stampede that followed, Pesavatī was crushed to death. As at the moment of death, her mind was full of respect and devotion to Sāriputta she was reborn in the Tāvātimsa heaven. (*Vimānavatthu* commentary, pp. 156-159)

While the Exalted One had attained mahāparinibbāna at Kusinārū and while
 Mallikavimāna. gods and men vied with one

another in doing reverence to the body of the Buddha, Mallikā, the wife of Bandhula and the daughter of a Malla king of Kusinārū, offered worship to the relic of the Buddha with a plenty of perfumes and garlands and also an ornament named Mahālatā which was very valuable. In consequence of this, she, after death, was reborn in the Tāvātimsa heaven, where she was bedecked in all yellow. (*Vimānavatthu* commentary, p. 165).

After the Buddha's parinibbāna, King Ajātasattu erected a stūpa over the relie of the Buddha that fell to his share. A daughter of a garland-maker of Rājagaha, Sunandā by name, daily used to send to the stūpa garlands, perfumes, fruits, flowers, etc., for the worship of the relie and on the uposatha day, she used to offer worship herself with her own hands at the stūpa. After death, she was reborn as an attendant of Sakka, who, on one occasion, addressed her as Visālakkhī. (Vimānavatthu commentary, pp. 169-170).

When the Buddha was at Sāvattihī, an upāsaka of the city invited the Buddha to his house and in front of the gate of his residence, he erected a beautiful pandal, and prepared nice and costly seats for the Buddha and his disciples. He offered excellent food, drink, garlands and perfumes to the Buddha. At that time a woman went to collect fire-wood at Andhavana and while returning home, with a large bundle of asoka twigs, with young leaves and beautiful flowers on them, she saw the Buddha seated in the pandal and worshipped him with *asoka flowers brought from that forest*. She twice went round the Buddha to show her respect towards him, then bowed and went her way. In consequence of this meritorious deed, she, after death, was reborn in the Tāvatisa heaven having a thousand apsaras to attend on her and passed

her time sporting, dancing and weaving heavenly garlands in the garden of Nandana (Vimānavatthu commentary, p 173)

When the Buddha was at Jetavana, an upāsaka
 Manjeṭṭhakavimāna invited him to dinner at his residence, erected a pandal in front of the gate of the house, and provided beautiful seats. At that time a maid-servant of another family came to the spot with many sāla flowers collected from the Andhavana, with them she worshipped the Buddha, thrice went round him and after making her obeisance, went away. After death she was reborn in the Tāvātimsa heaven and got a red glass palace fronted with a sāla garden (Vimānavatthu commentary, pp 176 177)

When the Buddha was residing at Rājagṛha, an upāsaka of that city was
 Pabbassaravimāna very much devoted to Mahāmoggallāna. The upāsaka's daughter was also devoted to him. One day Mahāmoggallāna, while on his usual round for alms, went to the upāsaka's place and the daughter welcomed him, offered him a seat, worshipped him with a garland of sumana flower and gave him sweets, etc. The thera was waiting to approve of her charity but she told him that as she too had many duties at home, she would listen to his religious discourse another day. She died on that day as her life period was over. She after death was reborn in the

Tāvātimsa heaven (Vimānavatthu commentary, pp 178 179)

An upāsikā of Benares was very much devoted to the Buddha. She got a pair of clothes woven, washed them with great care and offered them to the Lord. The latter accepted the present and delivered a religious discourse to her. In consequence of this good deed, she, after death, was reborn in the Tāvātimsa heaven, became the beloved of Sakka, acquired the name of Yasuttarā and received there an elephant decorated with golden ornaments (Vimānavatthu commentary, pp 181 182)

When the Buddha was at Sārnātha in Benares, one forenoon he went out for alms and entered the city. A poor woman named Alomā not finding anything better to offer, presented some rotten cooked rice without salt to the Buddha who accepted it. In consequence of this good deed, she, after death, was reborn in the Tāvātimsa heaven (Vimānavatthu commentary, p 184)

When the Buddha was at Andhakavinda, he once had pain in his stomach. He told Ānanda to go for alms and he was instructed to bring Kañjika or fermented rice gruel, if offered. Ānanda went to the house of the Buddha's physician, and on the wife of the physician asking him about the medicine, Ānanda told her that he was in

Nagavimāna

Alomavimāna

Kañjikadayika
vimāna

she was reborn as a celestial nymph. Another said that in consequence of her giving a blue lotus to a bhikkhu, she was reborn as a nymph. The third nymph offered a lotus to a bhikkhu and so she attained the state of a heavenly nymph. The fourth woman gave blossoms of sumana flowers to a bhikkhu and thus acquired the state of a celestial nymph. At the time of Gautama Buddha, they were in heaven and were met there by Mahāmoggallāna who, after listening to their talk, delivered a religious discourse to them who then reached the first stage of sanctification (Vimānavatthu commentary, pp 195-196)

When the Buddha was at Sāvathī, an upāsikā

Pitavimāna body of the Buddha Early in the morning, an upāsikā of Rājagaha after purifying herself in the bath, was going to worship the stūpa with four Kosātakī flowers On the way she was killed by a milch cow with a new born calf After death, she was reborn in the Tāvātimsa heaven and appeared before Sakka when he was enjoying himself in the heavenly gardens (Vimānavatthu commentary, p 200)

Vandanavimāna When the Buddha was at Sāvattthī, many bhikkhus after spending the rainy season in a village hermitage, were going to Sāvattthī to worship the Buddha and, on their way, they passed through another village A woman of the village, seeing them ed with veneration and after making obeisance to them, stood watching them with great respect and devotion, till they were out of sight After her death, she was reborn in the Tāvātimsa heaven (Vimānavatthu commentary, p 205)

Ajjumālāvimāna A daughter of a Brahmin at Gayāgāma became the mistress of her father in law's house She disliked a maidservant's daughter, whom she hated and used to beat for fault or no fault of hers Even when the maid's daughter came of age, there was no remission of the kicks and blows which became all the more severe as days went on The fact was that at the time of Kassapa Buddha the

girl had been the mistress and she used to ill-treat and beat her maid who was now born as the Brāhmana lady and the situation was reversed

The mistress used to punish the maid servant's daughter by pulling the hair of her head, the maid servant's daughter, therefore, had the hair of her head shaved by a barber. The mistress tied her head with a rope and punished her and thus the girl came to be called Rajjumālā. At last she went to a forest to commit suicide, unable any more to bear the rude treatment of the mistress. There she saw the Buddha sitting at the foot of a tree. She listened to his religious discourse. The master of the house coming to know of it, invited the Buddha to his house and his presence changed the mind also of his daughter in law who thenceforth came to like the girl whom she had hated before and ceased to ill-treat her. In consequence of her meritorious deed, the servant girl, after death, was reborn in the Tāvātimsa heaven. (Vimānavatthu commentary pp 206-209)

When the Buddha was at Campā on the bank of the famous tank, Gaggarā, he went out for alms and after returning home, one evening he gave religious instruction to the bhikkhus in an enchanting voice that charmed even the lower animals. At this time a frog came out of the Gaggarā tank and listened to the voice of the Buddha with great pleasure. As the frog

Maṇḍukadevaputta
vimāna

listened entranced to the Lord's voice it was trod upon by a cow herd who also had been attracted by the discourse. The frog died and in consequence of its meritorious deed, it was at once reborn in the Tāvātimsa heaven and there becoming conscious of all that had happened, came down in its heavenly chariot to the place where the discourse was going on, with the purpose of worshipping the Buddha (Vimānavatthu commentary, pp 217 218)

Revatī was the wife of Nandiya, a householder's son at Sārnāth. At first she was very unfaithful, uncharitable and impious. Afterwards being instructed by Nandiya, she used to offer charity to please him but when he was absent from home, she stopped all gifts and offerings and also when Nandiya died, she reverted to her evil practices, spoke all sorts of lies about the bhikkhus and stopped all works of charity that her husband had instituted. The result was that while enjoying the blessings of the Tāvātimsa heaven, Revatī was taken from one hell to another to suffer for her misdeeds (Vimānavatthu commentary, pp 220 foll)

Chatta was the son of a Brahmin at Setabba. His father sent him for education to a renowned teacher Pokkhara-sāti at Ukhatthā. He was intelligent and diligent and soon acquired a knowledge of the

Chattamaṇavaṇa
vimaṇa

Brahmanical lore. At his prayer, the teacher asked him to bring one thousand kaḥāpaṇas as the teacher's fee. He went home and his parents procured the money for him and he was to start with it on the morrow. Robbers coming to know of this decided to waylay him. The Buddha by his powers coming to know of his impending death, set out from the vihāra in the early dawn and meeting him on the way converted him to the faith. Proceeding on his way he met the robbers while passing through a forest and was killed. For his devotion to the faith he was reborn in the Tāvatisa heaven and was rewarded with a splendid vimāna known as Chattaviṃṣā after him. (V. commentary, pp. 229-33).

When the Buddha was at Rājagaha at Veluvana, there was a bhikkhu who used to make very strenuous efforts to meditate on vipassanākammatthāna. The Bhikkhu suffered from acute pain in the ear and could not get rid of it in spite of the best medical help. He informed the Buddha of his difficulty and the Buddha knowing that the soup prepared from the crab was the best medicine for his disease, asked him to go to Magadha for alms. Here he stood in front of a hut of a farmer who had got ready for his own meal rice and crab soup which he offered to the bhikkhu. The bhikkhu was at once relieved of his pain, became very happy

Rakkatakarasādāyaka-
vimāna

and even before his dinner was finished, he reached the stage of an arīhat. Moved with gratitude he heartily blessed the farmer who, after death, was reborn in the Tāvātimsa heaven having a vimāna with a golden crab hung in front of it (Vimānavatthu commentary, pp 243 244)

An upāsaka of Rājagaha daily used to offer food to four bhikkhus. But Dvarapalakavimāna there being some thieves in the neighbourhood of his house, the door of his house had always to be kept closed for fear of robbery, and on account of this, the bhikkhus had sometimes to return empty handed from his house. Once he asked his wife whether offerings were regularly made to the bhikkhus. He was told that for some days the bhikkhus had not turned up for alms, perhaps because the doors were closed. The householder appointed a gate keeper to receive the bhikkhus when they approached his house for alms. The gatekeeper used to do his duty with care and devotion and by listening to the exhortations of the bhikkhus, he was converted to the faith. The upāsaka, after death, was reborn in the Yāma heaven and the door keeper who used to welcome the bhikkhus, was reborn in the Tāvātimsa heaven after death (Vimānavatthu commentary, pp 246 247)

When the Buddha was at Sāvatti, an upāsaka while returning from the Karampiyavimāna river Aciravatī after taking

Brahmanical lore At his prayer, the teacher asked him to bring one thousand kaḥāpanas as the teacher's fee He went home and his parents procured the money for him and he was to start with it on the morrow Robbers coming to know of this decided to waylay him The Buddha by his powers coming to know of his impending death, set out from the viḥāra in the early dawn and meeting him on the way converted him to the faith Proceeding on his way he met the robbers while passing through a forest and was killed For his devotion to the faith he was reborn in the Tāvātimsa heaven and was rewarded with a splendid vimāna known as Chatta vimāna after him (V commentary, pp 229 33)

When the Buddha was at Rājagaha at Veluvana, kakkatakarasadayaka there was a bhikkhu who used viṇṇaṇa to make very strenuous efforts to meditate on vipassanākammamattāna The Bhikkhu suffered from acute pain in the ear and could not get rid of it in spite of the best medical help He informed the Buddha of his difficulty and the Buddha knowing that the soup prepared from the crab was the best medicine for his disease, asked him to go to Māgadha for aims Here he stood in front of a hut of a farmer who had got ready for his own meal rice and crab soup which he offered to the bhikkhu The bhikkhu was at once relieved of his pain, became very happy

Nagavimāna

mounted on an all-white elephant and attended by a large retinue and asked him what he had done in his previous life to earn them. The Devaputta replied that he had placed with his own hands eight nutta flowers at the stūpa built over the relic of Kassapa Buddha's body. It appears that at that time, Kiki, the King of Kāsī, with his nobles and the citizens of his capital, used to offer heaps of flowers at the golden stūpa of Kassapa Buddha, so that flowers became very rare and could be had at a high price. The above upāsaka obtained with much difficulty only eight flowers from a florist and with them he worshipped the stūpa. In consequence of this good deed, he was reborn as a devaputta in various vimānas and came to the Tāvātimsa heaven at the time of the Buddha Gautama. (V. commentary, pp. 252-54)

Dutiyānagavimāna

An upāsaka of Rājagaha was faithful, charitable, and was established in the three refuges and the five *sīlas*. In the morning he used to offer alms to various bhikkhus, in the afternoon he used to go to the vihāra with offerings of various sweet drinks and used to listen to religious discourses. After death, he was reborn in the Tāvātimsa heaven, possessing an all-white elephant. One day he came to the Veluvana with his vimāna (chariot) to worship the Buddha. (V. commentary 254-255)

While the Buddha was at Rājagaha, three

his bath, saw the Buddha going for alms. Learning on enquiry that the Buddha had not till then been invited by anybody, he with great veneration besought the Buddha to favour him by taking his dinner at his house. He then led the Buddha to his residence and placed excellent food and drink before him. After death, he was reborn in the Tāvātimsa heaven (V. commentary p. 248).

When the Exalted One was at Rājagaha at Veluvana, Sāriputta required

Sucivimāna

a needle to sew his garment.

He, on his needle-begging tour, came to the house of a blacksmith who, coming to know of his need, offered him two new needles for his use and requested him to come to his house whenever in future there was need of any like object. Sāriputta blessed him for his good intention and by virtue of this good deed, after death, the blacksmith was reborn in the Tāvātimsa heaven (Vimānavatthu commentary, p. 250).

A bhikkhu was in need of a needle at a vihāra at Veluvana at Rājagaha.

Datīya sucivimāna

A tailor who had gone to the

vihāra on a visit, coming to know of his need, offered some needles to the bhikkhu who blessed him. After death, the tailor was reborn in the Tāvātimsa heaven (Vimānavatthu commentary, p. 251).

Mahāmoggallāna saw in heaven a devaputta

Mahākaccāyana was living. A god who was Sujāta's well wisher, came to him in the guise of a deer. Sujāta followed the deer with the intention of capturing it and the deer disappeared near the hermitage of Mahākaccāyana. Mahākaccāyana instructed him in the faith and as he found that the young prince had only five months to live, advised him to go to his father and perform meritorious deeds during the short period of life that was still remaining. Sujāta, at his behest, went to the city, took up his residence in the city gardens and informed his father of his return. He explained to his father how he had a short period to live and with his help built a vihāra and then invited the thera to come thore. The king cordially welcomed him and Sujāta performing more meritorious deeds, was, after death, reborn in the Tāvātimsa heaven and he got a chariot decorated with seven kinds of gems, and seven yojanas in extent. (Vimānavatthu commentary, 259-270)

A devaputta named Gopāla of Tāvātimsa heaven worshipped in a previous birth the Buddha Vipassī with a garland of gold, in order that he might have a golden garland hanging from his neck in all his births. He passed through many births enjoying the object of his desire. At the time of Kassapa Buddha he was reborn as the son of King Kikī of Benares and made immense gifts and received the dhamma from that Buddha, but failing to reach

Maharathavamsa

Tatīyanāgavimāṇa bhikkhus, after their rainy weather-sojourn, were coming there from a distant village to pay their respects to him. But as night overtook them on the way, they repaired to a sugar cane field, the keeper of which requested them to stay there for the night. No houses being available there, the man prepared a cot with sugarcane stalks and upon it made a bed of sugarcane leaves for one bhikkhu, similarly he prepared cots and beds of straw and cloth for the other two bhikkhus. Next morning, when the bhikkhus were ready to start on their journey, he offered them rice with sugarcane juice and also a piece of sugarcane to each of them. A Brahmin who was a false believer and was the owner of the field, met the bhikkhus on the way and coming to learn from them that his servant had been so very liberal with his sugarcane, flew into a rage with the field keeper and beat him to death. After death the man was born in the Mote Hall called Sudhamma of the gods. (V commentary, pp 255-257)

After the Buddha's parinibbāṇa, Mahākaccāyana used to live in a forest hermitage in a frontier province.

Cūḷarathavimāṇa

At that time, in the kingdom of Assaka a king named Assaka ruled in the city of Potanā, Sujāta, the son of his first wife, was banished at the importunate insistence of his younger wife. Sujāta took up his residence in the same forest where

Mahākaccāyana was living. A god who was Sujāta's well-wisher, came to him in the guise of a deer. Sujāta followed the deer with the intention of capturing it and the deer disappeared near the hermitage of Mahākaccāyana. Mahākaccāyana instructed him in the faith and as he found that the young prince had only five months to live, advised him to go to his father and perform meritorious deeds during the short period of life that was still remaining. Sujāta, at his behest, went to the city, took up his residence in the city gardens and informed his father of his return. He explained to his father how he had a short period to live and with his help built a vihāra and then invited the thera to come thore. The king cordially welcomed him and Sujāta performing more meritorious deeds, was, after death, reborn in the Tāvātimsa heaven and he got a chariot decorated with seven kinds of goms, and seven yojanas in extent (Vimānavatthu commentary, 259-270).

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gave them to Mahāmoggallāna thinking that such an act of charity would do him good in this world and the next. He came to the king and related the matter. The king sent men to make enquiries about the truth of the statement and they reported that the Thera had presented the mangoes to the Buddha who again had given one mango to each of Sāriputta, Mahāmoggallāna and Mahākassapa and had eaten the fourth himself. The king thought very highly of the gardener who even at the risk of his life had been moved to perform such an act of charity, and presented the gardener with one village, various kinds of clothes and ornaments, etc., and asked him to make over to him (the king) a portion of the merit acquired by the gift of the mangoes. The gardener did so and after death, was reborn in the Tāvātimsa heaven. (Vimānavatthu commentary, pp. 288-289).

A bhikkhu who had passed the rainy season
 Upasāyadāyaka- in a village-hermitage near
 vimāna, Rājagaha, was going to Veluvana
 to worship the Buddha. In the evening he found
 himself in another village and meeting there an
 upāsaka he enquired whether there was any place
 where monks could spend the night. The upāsaka
 took him to his own house and after consulting his
 wife cordially received him and gave one room
 to the bhikkhu. The next-day he requested the
 bhikkhu to accept food and after feeding him to

the higher stages he was again reborn in the Tāvātimsa heaven. He enjoyed the blessings of the various heavens for a long time and at the time of Buddha Gautama, he was found in the Tāvātimsa heaven by Mahāmoggallāna. The great therā coming to learn of his previous births, again explained to him the principles of the faith, and Gopāla became established in the Sotāpatti stage (V cominy 270 271)

A rich couple of Rājagaha were pious and charitable and the door of their house was open to bhikkhus and bhikkhunīs, many of whom were supported by them. Both husband and wife performed various meritorious deeds for the three refuges throughout their life and in consequence, they were reborn in the Tāvātimsa heaven, having a very large golden vimāna full of celestial comforts (Vimānavatthu commentary, p 286)

When the Exalted One was residing at Rājagaha, King Bimbisāra had once the desire to have mangoes out of season. The gardener was asked to get mangoes but he requested the King to wait a few days during which he would take steps to make the trees yield fruits, as that was not the proper season. The gardener caused the mango trees to bear fruits out of season and was going to the king with four mangoes when he met Mahāmoggallāna who was out for alms. He

gave them to Mahāmoggallāna thinking that such an act of charity would do him good in this world and the next. He came to the king and related the matter. The king sent men to make enquiries about the truth of the statement and they reported that the Thera had presented the mangoes to the Buddha who again had given one mango to each of Sāriputta, Mahāmoggallāna and Mahākassapa and had eaten the fourth himself. The king thought very highly of the gardenor who even at the risk of his life had been moved to perform such an act of charity, and presented the gardener with one village, various kinds of clōthes and ornaments, etc., and asked him to make over to him (the king) a portion of the merit acquired by the gift of the mangoes. The gardener did so and after death, was reborn in the Tāvātimsa heaven. (Vimānavatthu commentary, pp. 288-289).

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 took him to his own house and after consulting his
 wife cordially received him and gave one room
 to the bhikkhu. The next-day he requested the
 bhikkhu to accept food and after feeding him to

his satisfaction, gave him a lump of jaggare with which to prepare a drink on the way. He accompanied the bhikkhu some distance out of his village and came back. The upāsaka with his wife, after death, was reborn in the Tāvātimsa heaven (V commentary p 291)

A bhikkhu of Rājagaha going about for alms stood before the door of a house
 Bhikkhadāyaka
 vimāṇa holder. An inmate of that house, who after having washed his hands and feet, had placed his food on a dish and was just going to partake of it, saw the bhikkhu and at once offered his own food to the bhikkhu who accepted the food and blessed him. In consequence of this good deed, he, after death, was reborn in the Tāvātimsa heaven (Vimānavatthu commentary, pp 292-293)

A poor boy of Rājagaha was appointed to guard the barley field of
 Yavapālakavimāṇa some person. One day in the morning his master gave him for breakfast some kummāsa (i.e. sour gruel) and sent him to look after the field. He took the food to the field and sat down at the foot of a tree in order to partake of it and at that moment an arahant wandering for alms came there and sat down at the foot of the same tree. The boy on enquiry coming to learn that the bhikkhu had not had any food till then, offered his own food to him, which he accepted and blessed him. The poor

hoy after death, was reborn in the Tāvatisa heaven. (Vimānavatthu commentary, p. 294).

The Exalted One was residing at Sāvattī.

Kuṇḍalīvimāna.

At that time two of the chief disciples of the Buddha with their attendants were touring the country of Kāśī and in the course of their wanderings, came to a vihāra in the evening. Coming to learn of their arrival, an upāsaka of a neighbouring village came there and made arrangements for their stay at night and invited them to take their food in his house next morning. He offered plenty of excellent food and drink to them at his house next morning and the upāsaka after death, was reborn in the Tāvatisa heaven. (Vimānavatthu commentary, p. 295).

After the parinibbāna of the Buddha, when

Uttarīvimāna.

the relics of his body had been placed in the stūpas at various places and when the great sangīti was taking place, among the bhikkhus who were requested to attend the First Council, the sage Kumārakassapa with five hundred bhikkhus, spent the rainy season in a certain forest of sīnīsapā trees near Setabba city. King Pāyāsi with his retinue went to him and the thera wishing to expound to him the continuity of life after death, delivered before him the excellent Pāyāsi-sutta which is full of the most convincing arguments, instructed him in the dhamma and converted him to the Buddhist

along the path and construct ghats or watering places for the bhikkhus. In every way he sought to make their journeys comfortable. He used to observe the precepts and offer charity. He after death was reborn in the Tāvātimsa heaven and his vimanā was marked out by beautiful manthūnas or pillars of the costliest jewels (V eommy, p 301)

When the Buddha was dwelling at Andhaka
 Suvappavimāna vinda, an upāsaka who was faithful and very rich, built an excellent gandhakūṭi, provided with all necessary comforts, on a hillock at a little distance from the village and offered it to the Buddha whom he served there with great devotion. In consequence after death he was reborn in the Tāvātimsa heaven (Vimānavatthu eommy p 302)

A poor man was the servant of a person who
 Ambavimāna had set him to guard his mango garden. One day, in summer, Sāriputta who was passing by that garden became tired and exhausted and was perspiring profusely owing to the heat. The poor guard, out of devotion to him, requested him to come to the garden and take rest. He also brought water from a well for bathing and drinking. The thera after bathing and drinking, blessed him and went away. The garden keeper, after death, was reborn in the Tāvātimsa heaven (Vimānavatthu eommentary, 305 306)

faith The king after conversion, practised charity but on a rather poor scale, not worthy of his position In consequence of this miserly charity, he, after death, was rewarded with a position in a comparatively low heaven, in the Cātummahārājika-devaloka An officer of King Pāyāsi called Uttara, had spent all his wealth in acts of charity and used to perform meritorious deeds, with great devotion In consequence he, after death, was reborn in the Tāvātimsa heaven (Vimānavatthu commentary, pp 297-298)

While the Buddha was at Sāvattthī, a poor
 Cittatāvīmāṇa man of the city used to earn
 his bread by serving other
 people He was very faithful, devoted to the three gems and was obedient to his parents He did not marry, thinking that the women who came to live with their husbands did not treat their fathers in law and mothers in-law with proper respect and devotion such as he himself used to show to his parents He after death was reborn in the Tāvātimsa heaven (Vimānavatthu commentary, p 299)

When the Lord was residing at Jetavana
 Manithūnavīmāṇa near Sāvattthī, a large number
 of bhikkhus used to live in forest-hermitages An upāsaka would sweep the path which the bhikkhus used when going out for alms He used to level the roads, remove thorns, construct bridges over water course, dig tanks

along the path and construct ghats or watering places for the bhikkhus. In every way he sought to make their journeys comfortable. He used to observe the precepts and offer charity. He after death was reborn in the Tāvātimsa heaven and his vimānā was marked out by beautiful manūthūnas or pillars of the costliest jewels (V. com. p. 301).

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A gopāla (cowherd) of Rājagṛha took with
 him to the field kummāsa or
 Gopālavimāna sour gruel for his breakfast
 Mahāmoggallāna came to know that the poor
 cowherd would soon die and that if he would
 offer him the sour gruel, he would go to heaven.
 He came there out of pity, to give the gopāla an
 opportunity of saving himself, the cowherd
 who was about to eat the sour gruel offered it to
 him and then went away to drive out the cows
 from a cornfield they had entered. He was bitten
 by a snake on the way and coming back to the
 thera, he found the latter eating the sour grain
 and was pleased at the sight. Very soon the
 poison worked on him and after death he was
 reborn in the Tavatimsa heaven (V. commy.
 p. 308).

In the night of the great renunciation, when
 the Bodhisatta said addressing
 Kanthakavimāna his horse, Kanthaka, "Carry
 me, my darling and attaining *sambodhi* I shall
 deliver the world." Then the horse inspired
 with the consciousness of carrying that great
 burden on his back, was filled with immense joy
 and devotion. Again when on the bank of the
 river Anoma the Bodhisatta asked Kanthaka to
 return with Channa to Kapilavastu, the horse
 was weighed down with sorrow and licked the
 Bodhisatta's feet, and his heart was filled with
 noble ardour and devotion. In consequence of

this, after death, the horse was reborn in the Tāvātimsa heaven and known as Kanthakadeva putta who one day while going to the Nandanavana in a celestial chariot, met Mahāmoggallāna on the way and related to him the events of his past life (Vimānavatthu commentary, pp 312-314)

Thirty thousand kappas ago when Sumedha the sammāsambuddha, had
Anekavannavimāna attained mahāparinibbāna, and many earthyas had been built over the relics of his body, a bhikkhu after leading the life of a celibate for a long time, again became a householder, but he was in the habit of performing meritorious deeds and he used to worship the earthyas and listen to the discourses. After death he reached heaven and owing to the accumulation of much merit, he was more powerful than Śakka. In the deva and manussalokas, after various births, owing to the residue of his merit, at the time of Gautama Buddha, he was reborn in the Tāvātimsa heaven in a vimāna of diverse colours, that is, an *anekavannavimāna*, and was called as such by the other devaputtas (Vimānavatthu commentary, 319-320)

(See my work, The Buddhist Conception of
Maṭṭhakuṇḍalinimāna Spirits, pp 32-33)

We have seen before in another vimāna story
Serisakavimāna that King Pāyāsi of the city of Setavya was converted by the sage Kumāra Kassapa, but he was not a liberal

minded man and his acts of charity were done neither with a whole heart nor with his own hands. In consequence he after death, could not reach the Tāvātimsa heaven but was reborn in the lower heaven of the Catummahārājikas, in a vacant vimāna called the Serīsakavimāna. It had been built for a man who while living at the time of Kassapa Buddha had served a bhikkhu who was seated in the sun with a shade over him made with the branches of a Sirisa tree bound together and lowered down. He after death was born in this vimāna which was marked out by a sirisa forest in front of it and his vimāna was always decorated with sirisa flowers. This man at the time of Gautama Buddha was born on earth and reached the stage of an arhat. He meeting the king in his deserted vimāna asked him about his past history and coming to learn of it, preached to men how king Payāsi could not reach the higher heavens for not practising charity with his own hands. Vessavana Mahārāja placed the Serisa vimāna with the king in a desert for the shelter of travellers going through that desert. There he met a company of merchants of Anga and Magadha, who had lost their way in the desert. There was a long conversation between Payāsi and the merchants and at last he conveyed the merchants to Pataliputta in his vimāna. One of the merchants named Sambhava was a religious upāsaka and he reported the whole

versation to the Theras and at the second sangīti, it was embodied in the compilation of the holy literature. (Vimānavatthu eommy. pp. 331 foll).

When Kassapa-Sammāsambuddha had attained
 parinibbāṇa and an extensive
 Sumakkhittavimāṇa. *Kanaka-thūpa* was built over
 the relics of his body, large concourse of men used
 to come there to worship with flowers and perfumes.
 An upāsaka who was very much devoted to the
 worship of that Buddha, used to arrange properly
 the flowers scattered by the people, so that they
 looked beautiful and roused the ardour and devo-
 tion of men who visited the shrine. After
 doing this, he thought of the glories of the Buddha
 and felt a joy within himself and after death was
 reborn in a golden mansion in the Tāvātimsa
 heaven. (Vimānavatthu commentary, pp. 352
 foll).

SECTION III

OBSERVATIONS

It will be seen from the above account of the

The form of the
vimāna and its com-
forts proportionate to
meritorious deeds

vimānas or celestial mansions
that the form of the vimāna
and the comforts and pleasures

provided therein are proportionate not only to
the meritorious deeds done on earth, but also to
the particular nature of the deeds themselves,
as also to the desire of the dweller of the vimāna.
The girl of Rājagaha whose story is recorded in
the Kuñjaravimāna was told by the learned,
“ Good lady, good deeds are like the Cintāmani,
the jewel with miraculous powers, which turns
everything that it touches into gold, and they are
also like the *Kapparakkha* or the divine tree that
produces everything that one may desire from it.
When the proper environment and the proper
mental condition are produced, whatever one prays
for when doing a work is sure to be won. By
giving a seat one gets a very high position, by
bestowing food one secures health and wealth,
by the gift of clothes one acquires good complexion
(vanna) and property, the gift of conveyances
procures for the giver special happiness, and
that of lights begets powers of vision, by giving
a house one gets all sorts of property ” (Vimāna-
vatthu commentary, p 32)

It appears from the stories given in the Vimānavatthu commentary that most of the departed spirits go to the Tāvātimsa heaven. Only in very rare cases do we read of a spirit passing to the regions of the higher gods, the Nimmānaratis. It is only in very exceptional cases indeed that spirits go to the Brahmaloḥa. Downward also

The Tāvātimsa heaven
—the abode of most
of the departed spirits

we read only in one case, that of King Pāyāsi, that the King went to the region of Cātum-

mahārājikadevas for stinginess in making gifts. His story also makes it clear that it is not the quantity but the devotion with which the gift is made, that determines the place one is to acquire after death.

Another thing that deserves notice is that the vimāna may not always be in the heavenly regions. As in the case of King Pāyāsi, the vimāna with its comforts was placed down below on earth in the midst of a desert. In the stories of the Petavatthu we have seen many such spirits living in their vimānas in solitary places on earth, on the sea, in the forest or amidst the sands of the desert.

Location of the
vimānas

This is specially the case with the spirits in the lower heavens, who are not sufficiently purified or whose attachment to things on earth is still rather keen. The spirits could at will come down on earth in their vimānas, and in several cases they came to the Buddha on their vimānas.

to listen to his discourse Evidently these vimānas could not carry their occupants to the higher heavens, nowhere do we read of their going to any region higher than their own

The heaven of the Buddhists is the heaven of a people with refined and delicate tendencies, it has nothing in common with the Valhalla where the spirits of the departed warriors, the worshippers of Odin and Thor, enjoy the supreme bliss of fighting and feasting The fortunate dwellers in the Buddhist vimānas are marked out by a beautiful golden yellow complexion emitting rays of brilliance that make up a sort of aureole round about them There is a play of brilliance

Dwellers in the Buddhist vimānas—their joys and comforts

and charming colours in the dress and in the paraphernalia in general of the dwellers in

the heavenly palaces, all the wealth of India, gold and precious stones, rubies and sapphires, emeralds and diamonds abound in the vimānas There are sweet scented perfumes and an abundance of flowers, the padma, the utpala, the pundarikā—all varieties of the lotus and the hly, the sirisa, the campaka—in fact all the wealth of Indian flora Beautiful plants and creepers, sometimes ujānas or gardens and even huge trees—an *ambavana* as in the case of the Ambavimāna—beautify and lend grace to these palatial abodes of the Buddhist heaven Out of these vimānas, in which there are dancing and music, come out

sweet sounds that enrapture the soul and regale the ears. (*dibbā saddā nissaranti savaniyā manoramā*). Soft hreezes laden with perfumes come from them and fill the surrounding atmosphere. Garlands of the sweetest and most charming flowers worn on the head or hung from the neck bedeck the persons of the occupants of the *vimānas*, who have the human form but are far more brilliant and dazzling than anything ever found on earth. We read of the *Chat-tamānavāḥa* that the sun in the heavens shines not so brilliant, nor is the moon so soft as the rays emitted by him. The sun's rays are pale in splendour before the dazzling brilliance of the *vimāna*, a brilliance that illumines twenty-five *yojanas* on all sides, and turns even the night into day. Some of the *vimānas*, like the *Mahā-rathavimāna* of *Gopāladevaputta*, are drawn by a thousand horses. Twenty-four verses describe the beauties and splendour of this great chariot-like *vimāna*. We also read that this chariot like many others is painted in beautiful colours.

The pleasures enjoyed by the *Tāvātimsa* gods are mainly, if not entirely, physical; there is nothing of the deeper joys that enrapture the soul. The joys of the *vimānas* are inferior to the nobler and the purer bliss that is enjoyed by the pure soul, by the *bhikkhu* who holds the mere pleasures of the senses in absolute contempt. A *bhikkhu*

The pleasures of the
Tāvātimsa heaven.

who by restraint and freedom from desires acquired the stage of an Arahāt, has no reason to be envious of these vimāna gods, he is superior even to Sakka the king of the Tāvātimsa gods. Even Brahma is in no way superior to him. For the aspirant after the highest stages of *arahatta* and *nibbāna* *puñña* and *pāpa* (merit and demerit) are equally reprehensible. The highest of the pleasures that these heavens bestow has a limit—it is not ever lasting. When the fruits of a good deed are consumed, the man has again to come down to earth, to be buffeted by the waves of *kaṃma*, of *puñña* and *pāpa*. They can never bring about a final release from evil and hence, the experiences in heaven, though pleasurable, are an evil to be guarded against—the more so on account of their luring attractiveness.

The six heavens from the world of the Cātum
The various grades of heaven
mahārājikadevas up to that of the Paranimmitavasavattīs are
worlds of sensuous enjoyment or of sense experiences, the *Kāmalokas*, the worlds of desire or the heavens of the concupiscence world. Beyond the Cātumahārājikadevas lies the world of the Tāvātimsa devas where, as we have seen, repair after death most of the ordinary mortals who have done some good deeds on earth, people who have done some good to the members of the saṃgha but have not entered the saṃgha proper, or if they have not entered even the first stage

PART II—HELL

Hell (*niraya*), according to the Buddhist conception, ordinarily seems to

Hells in Buddhist Literature

be a region situated below the *terrafirma* we tread on. The

Visuddhumagga informs us that *niraya* is so called because it is devoid of the happiness which is the cause of the attainment of *sagga* and *mokkha*. It is also called *apāya*, *duggati* and *vinipāta*. *Apāya* includes *tīracchāna* (animal kingdom), *pettivisaya* (*peta* world), *asura* world and all hells (II 427). The universe, according to the Buddhists, consists of many spheres, *cakravālas*, each of which has its own earth, sun, moon, heavens and hells (Kern, *Indian Buddhism*, p. 57).

Hell is regarded as one of the six kinds of exist-

Hell one of the six kinds of existence

ence, which form the ten *dhātus*, which, according to some of the schools, possess ten character-

istics, namely, (1) form, (2) essential nature, (3) substance, (4) power or force, (5) action, (6) cause, (7) condition, (8) effect, (9) retribution and (10) the final identity (*Yamakami Sogen*, *Systems of Buddhist Thought*, pp. 275-276).

Edkins observes from a study of the Chinese

Hell a place of punishment for the wrong doer

works on Buddhism that hell, hungry ghosts and animals are assigned to the wicked. All

boings, whether virtuous or vicious, continue to be reborn in one of the six states (e g gods, men, monsters, hell, hungry ghosts and animals) until saved by the teaching of the Buddha (Chinese Buddhism, p 195)

Keith observes in this connection that the universe consists of many world systems, each equipped with earth, heavens and hells, and each system or sphere is divided into three regions (avacaras), worlds (loka) or layers (dhātu), the first, the realm of desire (kāma), the next, of matter or material form (rūpa), and the third that without form (arūpa) In the first are hells or purgatories eight or more in number, while others exist between the spheres (lokantarika), the animal world, the abode of ghosts (pretas), the abode of asuras or demons, which make up the places of punishment (apāya), then comes the abode of men and then six abodes of gods (Buddhist Philosophy, pp 92 93)

Mr Haekmann is right in saying that hell is placed in contrast to heaven A coarser delineation of reward and punishment in happy or unhappy surroundings replaces the old philosophical conception of existence being a state of suffering, and of the final release from it through the removal of all empirical being (Buddhism as a Religion, p 54)

The very lowest of the thirty-one abodes of

The principal hells. living beings are the hells or places of punishment where the departed spirits have to undergo tortures in consequence of the evil deeds done by them while on earth. The principal hells are eight in number and known by the names of Sañjīva, Kālasūtra, Sanghāta, Raurava, Mahāraurava, Tapanā, Pratāpana and the very deepest, Avīci. Apart from these, there are the Lokāntarika hell and many minor hells. In the old system of the Northern Buddhists, there are, besides the eight hot hells, as many cold hells : Arbuda, Nirarbuda, Aṭaṭa, Hahava, Huhava, Utpala, Padma and Mahāpadma. The Pāli canon mentions the same number and a few more; Aṭaṭa, Abbuda, Nirabhuda, Ahaha, Ababa, Kumuda, Uppalaka, Sogandhika, Puṇḍarika and Paduma. In later northern works the number of hells is still greater. (Kern, *Indian Buddhism*, p. 58). Above the hells is placed the animal kingdom. Higher than the animal kingdom is the abode of pretas, ghosts, spectres, though these beings are also placed in the Lokāntarika hell. The hells, together with the next three worlds, constitute the four Apāyalokas or places of suffering. (Ibid, p. 59).

According to the Chinese account, the lowest

The Wou kan hell is the Wou-kan, the hell without interval (avīci) i.e. without interval of rest, a place of incessant torment. It is the lowest of the places of

torment. (Beal, *A Catena of Buddhist Scriptures*, p. 57).

Childers shows from a consideration of what is stated in the Pāli text that there are eight Mahānarakas or principal hells. Besides these, there is the Lokantarika hell which is a place of punishment. It is partly inhabited by pretas. There are many minor hells. The Buddhist hell is a place of torment in which former sins are expiated, but it is only a temporary state and may be immediately followed by re-birth in one of the higher devalokas. (Pāli Dictionary, p. 260).

Sir Charles Eliot points out that the Buddhist hells are temporary. They cannot be regarded as places of eternal punishment. The denizens of these hells have the power of fighting for the acquisition of merit but the task being difficult, one may repeatedly be born in hell. (Hinduism & Buddhism, Vol. I., p. 338).

There are many places of torment, to which those go whose conduct has been bad in act, word, or thought or who have been guilty of some one atrocious crime, such as that of the slanderer of Sāriputta, or that of Devadatta, when he drew blood from the Buddha's foot. Such and such a character or the doer of such and such a deed is frequently said to be "as good as cast already into hell,"

Childers' view

Sir Charles Eliot
Hells are places of
temporary, not
eternal, punishment

A layman's religion

just as the virtuous are said to be "as good as gone to heaven already." The doctrine of heaven and hell is thus especially the layman's religion (Copleston, *Buddhism, Primitive & Present*, p 140)

The Nikāyas, the earliest portion of the Pāli Buddhist literature contain some interesting information regarding the hells. The Anguttara Nikāya assures us that a bhikkhu who has no faith in the Buddha and on the other hand, is shameless, lazy and unwise, goes to hell after death (Anguttara Nikāya, Vol III, p 3) The same Nikāya adds that a bhikkhu who is wicked or is an evil doer, who does unholy deeds, who commits sin secretly, who pretends to be a samana, who is not a brahmacāri although he pretends to be one, who is foolish and who is full of impurities, after death goes to hell. If such a bhikkhu accepts charity from Brahmans and Ksatriyas and accepts salutation from them, he after death, goes to hell (Ibid, Vol IV, pp 129 130) Nanda's mother, Ve u kantakī, said to Sāriputta that her husband after death, was reborn as a yakkha and had appeared before her in his former birth (Ibid, p 66) A person who is wicked, jealous and miserly, is thrown into hell. He who has no such vices goes to heaven (Ibid, Vol I, p 105)

Those who commit sin by body, mind and

are to suffer on account of the sins committed by themselves and not by their parents, friends, relatives, etc Yama then asks another set of sinners, "Have you not seen a man or woman lying dead for a day or two or three, swollen, turned blue and having pus in the dead body?" They reply in the affirmative and they are subjected to the same set of questions and answers as before

Five kinds of punishment

The hell-guards inflict five kinds of punishment —(1) They strike hot iron nails into the hands and feet in the centre of the chest of the sinners who are to suffer in hell as long as the sins are not exhausted, (2) They cut the sinners with an axe, (3) They cut and polish the skin of the sinners with an axe, (4) They thrust them into a red-hot iron jar with their feet upwards and heads hanging downwards They then put the red hot iron jar on a mountain of burning charcoal They are boiled in the jar as it is rolled upwards and downwards; (5) They are yoked to a chariot and repeatedly driven backward and forward along a path which is as hot as fire and which gives out flames (Anguttara Nikāya, Vol I, pp 138 141) It is distinctly stated in the Commentary on the Anguttara Nikāya that the Avīci hell is called the mahāniraya

The Avīci Hell

(Manorathapūraṇī, p 408), which has four corners and four gates. It is divided into equal compartments and surrounded on all sides by an iron wall. Its lid is made

of iron. It has an iron floor which is blazing and giving out flames. Its area is a hundred yojanas (Anguttara Nikāya, Vol I, pp 141 142). According to Buddhaghosa, a sinner is made to lie down on his back and his body becomes three leagues (long) in hell. Iron spears are then passed through his right hand palm, his left hand palm, right and left legs and the chest. He is struck with a big axe, profuse blood flows from the wounds which are moreover burnt by fire issuing out of the iron floor. The sinner is cut into six or eight pieces (Manorathapūranī, Sinhalese edition, p 207). The *nirayapālās* referred to above are officers of hell who carry out the orders of Yama (Manorathapūranī, p 405).

According to the Samyutta Nikāya the Buddha is credited with the opinion that a person will suffer the consequence of whatever may preponderate as between an act and the forbearance from it, that is to say, if the period during which a man abstains from cruelty and homicide is of a longer duration than the period during which he kills animals, he will not go to hell (Samyutta Nikāya, Vol IV, p 317 foll).

The Jātakas also furnish us with some information about hell and the deeds that lead to it. In Buddha's time those who took refuge in the three gems had not to go to hell (Jātaka, Fausboll Vol I,

Punishment accord-
ing to the Samyutta
Nikāya

Hell in the Jatakas

King Nimi was taken by Mātali, the charioteer of Indra, to visit the hells.

Nimi's visit to hell.

At first he went to the Vaitaranī river where the guards of hell were heating the hellish creatures with burning swords, spears, clubs, etc., and the hellish creatures unable to bear the torture, used to drop down into the river Vaitaranī covered with canes full of thorns. The hellish creatures suffered much, being cut into pieces by thorns and from the bottom of the river came out burning spears as long as palm trees. Pierced by these spears, they suffered intolerable tortures. Those who being stout and strong, oppress those who are poor and physically weak, have to suffer in the Vaitaranī river. Nimi saw in one place hell-dogs devouring the hellish creatures who in their previous births were misers, abusers of the samāṇas and brāhmanas, jealous and mischievous. Thence the King Nimi went to another place in hell where he saw hellish creatures being dragged over a burning floor, for having been in their former existence envious of men and women. At another place he saw a heap of burning charcoal in which were being thrown those hellish creatures who in their former existence,

p 96) A king named Kalāhn tried to kill the Bodhisatta who was then a rishi and in consequence of this sin, he fell into the Avīci hell (Ibid, Vol III, p 42) Devadatta who spoke falsehood, was swallowed up by the earth and at last fell into the Avīci hell (Ibid, Vol III, p 454, see also Vol IV, p 158) King Cetaya had to suffer in the Avīci hell because he indulged in falsehood and abused a rishi (Ibid, Vol III, p 460) A person named Adhamma fell into the Avīci hell for having opposed the Bodhisatta who, at the time, bore the name of Dhamma (Ibid, Vol IV, p 103) An acelaka promised not to divulge any secret but he fell into the Avīci hell in consequence of having broken this promise (Ibid, Vol V, p 87) The Jātakas speak of two hells, Khura

Two Hells

Khuradhāra hell, In the hellish creatures are dragged along a floor strewn with razors having very sharp edges Those who cause *miscarriage* have to suffer in this hell (Ibid, Vol V 274) In the *Kotisimbahniraya*, there is a Simbali tree on the bank of the river Vaitarani with blazing branches and leaves hanging over the water Among the hellish creatures suffering in the river, those who are guilty of adultery, attempt to get out of the river by those branches and as soon as they get up with the help of the blazing branches, they are burnt (Ibid, Vol V, pp. 275 276)

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onvy against pious samanas and brāhmanas He further saw hellish creatures cutting their own necks and throwing them into hot water He saw others trying to quench their thirst by drinking water from a river but it dried up the moment they attempted to take a sip The hellish creatures shrieked as they were beaten He saw in another part of the hell a big lake full of urine and excreta and the creatures oppressed by hunger were devouring these things Another lake was full of blood and pus and the people parching with thirst were seen drinking them Some hellish creatures were seen being dragged by means of hooks attached to their tongue They were horrible to look at (Nimi Jātaka, (Fausboll) Vol VI, p 104, foll)

The Buddhists hold that the Fire of Hell is far hotter than any ordinary fire

A tiny stone cast into any ordinary fire, will smoke for a whole day without rumbling But a rock as big as a pagoda, cast into the Fire of Hell, will crumble in an instant As for the living beings that are reborn in Hell,

No total destruction
of the inhabitants
of hell

no matter how many thousand years they are tormented therein, they go not to destruction (Buddhist Parables, p 215) It is because of the power of Kamma that the inhabitants of hell, no matter how many thousands of years they are tormented in hell, are not totally destroyed. Right there are they born, right there

do they die Moreover the Exalted One said, "He shall not die so long as the Evil Kamma is is not exhausted" (Ibid, p 216) Those living beings who are truly guilty of evil deeds guilty of evil words, guilty of evil thoughts, defamers of the Noble, holders of wrong views—followers of courses of conduct corresponding to wrong views—these living beings upon dissolution of the body, are reborn in hell (Digha N, Vol I, p 82) Those monks and brāhmanas who hold the doctrine that there is no harm in the pleasures of the senses, consort with nuns and fall into the slough of the pleasures of the senses, on the dissolution of the body, are reborn in hell where they experience sharp bitter sensations of pun on account of the pleasures of the senses (Majjhima Nikāya, Vol I, p 307) A man who is a murderer, a thief an adulterer, a liar, a backbiter, a holder of false views upon dissolution of body, is reborn in hell (Buddhist Parables, p 280) If any person violates the precepts, he or she is smitten with the punishments of hell (Ibid, p 309) Those persons who induce sensual, sensual, or mentally confused states in others and cause them to lose earnestness, will after death be reborn in purgatory (Psalms of the Brethren, p 369) If any of the Buddha's disciples does not obey the rules of conduct, five losses are incurred by him By neglect he incurs great loss of property, a bad report of him goes about, if he goes into

ted torments." The Yāma naraka is half-way between. (Ibid, p. 225). In the Petavatthu

there is a reference to the
 Horrors of hells.

Sattussada hell which is a horrible spectacle. Amhasakkhara, a Licchavi, who was the doer of an evil deed, was reborn in it. It is a hideous place of torment (p. 46). Here a sinner is tied with five kinds of fetters, hot iron is placed upon him, he is laid on a mountain of burning charcoal, then he is thrown into a hot iron jar and he is made to enter a forest where the leaves of the trees are pointed and sharp-edged like swords, afterwards he is made to cross the river Baitaranī and lastly he is thrown into the great hell. It is called Sattussada because seven kinds of horrible tortures are inflicted one after the other in this hell. (Petavatthu commentary, p. 221). There is a reference to another hell called the Padumaniraya. It is difficult to ascertain exactly the lease of life of sinners in this hell. The length of life in the Abbuda hell is equal

The length of a
 sinner's life
 in hell

to the time taken in exhausting
 sesamum seeds measuring twenty
khārikas by throwing away the

grains one after another for a hundred years. The length of life of a sinner in the Nirabbuda hell is more than twenty times the life of a sinner in the Abbuda hell and likewise the period of existence goes up in each of the following—Ahaba, Aṭaṭa, Ahaṇa, Kumuda. Sogandika, Uppala, Puṇḍarika

any company whether of warriors or of brāhmanas or of householders or of ascetics, he enters it without confidence and in confusion, at the moment of death he is bewildered and after death and the dissolution of the body, he goes to some evil condition or place of torment or hell (Copleston, Buddhism, p 139) Anyone who slanders or ridicules an ariya, a disciple of the Buddha or pa cekabuddha will be transferred to the Avīci naraka till the end of a kalpa (Visud dhimagga, Vol II, p 425) He will then be born as a wandering hungry ghost and after a thousand kalpas he becomes an animal After a thousand kalpas more he will again become a man

The opinion the Buddhists hold on the forgiveness of sin is, that it can be obtained by repentance and meritorious deeds A definite amount of gifts and worship will bring about the removal of a corresponding amount of sin and its attendant sufferings Thus a filial daughter, by a certain number of days spent in worshipping a Bodhisatta or a Buddha, can obtain the rescue of a mother from hell (Edkins, Chinese Buddhism, p 196)

The Buddhist hells, the prisons of the lost,

Situation of the hells
Avīci and Yama
narakas

are in some cases situated underneath the region inhabited by man Twenty thousand yojanas

(280,000 miles) below the Jambu continent is one called the Avīci hell or the "Hell of unintermit

ted torments" The Yāma nāraka is half way between (Ibid, p 225) In the Petavatthu

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and the Paduma (Samyutta Nikāya, Vol I, p 152) It was in the Padumanuaya, the very last in this series, that a bhikkhu named Kokālika who rebuked Sāriputta and Moggallāna and hated them, had to suffer for an immeasurably long period This information was given to the Buddha by Brahmā Sahampati (Samyutta Nikāya, Vol I, p 151 of the Dhammapada atthakathā, Vol IV, pp 91 93) There is a reference to the Lohakumbhiniraya Four setthiputtas (banker's sons) used to spend their money and time by indulging in various vices, *e g adultery, kidnapping and so on* and as a consequence they had to suffer in the Lohakumbhu hell (Dhammapada commentary, Vol II, pp 10 11) There is a reference to the Mahāniraya where Devadatta had to suffer being devoured by the earth We know that he bore bitter malice against the Buddha, tried to take his life, brought about disunion in the Saṃgha and did many other evil and sinful deeds In consequence of all these terrible sins, he fell into the Mahāniraya (Sumangalavilāsinī, pt I, pp 138 139, cf Itivuttaka, p 85)

The Sutta Nipāta of the Khuddaka Nikāya
 Hells in the Sutta Nipata of the Sutta Pitaka speaks of
 twenty Abbuda hells, twenty
 Nirabbuda hells, twenty Ababa hells, twenty Ahaha
 hells, twenty Atata hells, twenty Kumuda hells,
 twenty Sogandhika hells, twenty Uppalaka hells and
 twenty Pundarika hells (S B E, Vol X, p 121)

Speaking of the Brahmins born in the family of the followers of the hymns (of the Vedas), the Sutta Nipāta says that they are continually caught in sinful deeds, and are to be blamed in this world while in the coming world hell awaits them. Birth does not save them from hell. (Sutta Nipāta, P.T.S., p. 24). A foul-mouthed, false, ignoble, blasting, wicked, evil-doing, low, sinful and base born man should not be garrulous otherwise he would become an inhabitant of hell. (Sutta Nipāta, P.T.S., 123). *In hell one is struck with iron hooks, to the iron stake with sharp edges he goes, then he has to swallow as food a red-hot ball of iron. He is made to lie on a bed of embers and has to enter a blazing pyre. He is then boiled in a huge iron pot. Ho who commits sin is sure to be hoiled in a mixture of matter and blood, in water full of worms.* (Sutta Nipāta, P.T.S., pp. 129-130). *In hell there is the origination of suffering but there is no indication of the path leading to the cessation of it.* (Yamaka, P.T.S., Vol. I, p. 179).

Among the denizens of the infernal regions we should perhaps include the Kālakañjaka asuras. In the Kathāvatthu we read that the Kālakañjaka asuras are like petas in their complexion and also in thoir food, wealth and longevity and the Vepacittiparisādevas are like petas in colour, food, wealth and longevity. (Kathāvatthu, Vol. II., p. 360).

The Dhammapada commentary narrates many stories furnishing much information regarding hell. There was a peasant at Benares who used to cultivate his fields with the help of a bull which was very lazy. He tried several times to correct its indolence but in vain. At last he grew so very angry with it that he covered the bull with hay and set fire to it with the result that the bull was burnt to death. As a result of this evil deed, he had to suffer for a long time in hell and to work out the last remnants of the sin accruing from his misdeed, he was reborn seven times as a crow which lost its life in fire. (Dhammapada commentary, III, 40-41)

Stories in the Dhammapada Commentary regarding sinners who went to hell

stories furnishing much information regarding hell. There was a peasant at Benares who

A woman exasperated with her dog, tied a jar full of sand to its neck, threw it into water and thus killed it. In consequence of this evil deed, she had to suffer in hell for a long time. At last for hundred births she was thrown into water with a jar full of sand tied to her neck. (Dhammapada commentary, Vol. III., pp 41-42).

A jeweller was one day engaged in cooking meat when he received from King Pasenadi a diamond with an order to bore a hole in its centre and send it back at once. The jeweller was in the habit of offering alms daily to a bhikkhu who was present there at that time. He placed the diamond in sight of the bhikkhu and went to wash his hands. After coming back to the spot,

he could not find the diamond which during his absence had been swallowed up by his tame crane, which had mistaken it for a lump of flesh. The jeweller however suspected the bhikkhu. Though his wife urged that the bhikkhu was quite innocent, he was not convinced and gave the bhikkhu such a good beating that his head broke and blood came out of it. The tame crane came to suck the blood and the jeweller angrily kicked it with the result that it died instantaneously. The bhikkhu told him to cut the dead crane up, assuring him that the diamond would be found inside its stomach. The crane was cut up and on examining its entrails the diamond was found. As a result of this misdeed, the jeweller after death was reborn in hell. (Ibid, Vol. III, pp. 34-37). Mahāmoggallāna born as a kulaputta of Benares in a previous birth, was induced by his wife to murder his parents. In consequence of this sin, he had to suffer in hell for many years. (Ibid, Vol. III, pp. 68-69). A king of Benares appointed a person to guard one of his frontier provinces against thieves who made frequent incursions there. It was his duty to look to the safety of travellers crossing the disturbed frontier. Once a traveller with his beautiful wife arrived and sought his aid. The guard told them that he would help them to cross the border next morning. In the meantime, being enamoured of the beauty of the traveller's wife, he tried to win her. The evil-minded guard concealed a

gem inside the cart of the traveller, announced its loss and kicked up a row over it. To find out the gem, he had the traveller's cart searched, and naturally, the gem was discovered there. He killed the traveller on a charge of theft. For this sin he had to suffer in the Avīci hell (Dhammapada commentary, Vol III, pp 150 151)

Ciñca, a female devotee of the Niganthas, brought a false charge of adultery against the Samana Gotama. In consequence of this evil deed, she was devoured by the earth in the presence of the Buddha and then she fell into the Avīci hell (Dhammapada commentary, Vol III, pp 178 181)

A cowkiller used to slaughter cows daily and sell them. Without beef he could not eat rice. Once it so happened that having left a piece of flesh with his wife, he went to bathe but an intimate friend of her came in the meantime and took it away. The cowkiller on hearing this at once set out, cut the tongue of a cow and ate it after having it duly cooked. On account of this sin he had to suffer in the Avīci hell (Dhammapada commentary, Vol III, pp 332 334)

A banker named Tagara in a previous birth killed his brother's only son for money. Hence he was reborn seven times without any son and his property was confiscated seven times by the king. He had to suffer in hell for many years on account of this sin. At the time of King

Pasenadi of Kosala, he was reborn as a setṭhi who was sonless and having died without any issue, his property was confiscated by the king. All his previous merits had been exhausted and as no new merit was accumulated he had to suffer in the Mahāruruva hell. (Dhammapada commentary, Vol. IV., pp. 77-79).

The Itivuttaka records that it is the word of the Buddha that those who commit sins in body, mind and speech are reborn in hell after death. (Itivuttaka, p. 99, Ibid., p. 12). Those who become conceited on account of wealth and fame are reborn in hell after death. (Ibid, p. 73).

The Visuddhimagga also tells us how the commission of sins during life leads to sufferings in hell, and it gives a description of some of the hells. Avīci Hell measures ten thousand yojanas. (Visuddhimagga, Vol. I., p. 207). Buddha by his supernatural power showed the Avīci hell by dividing the earth into two parts at Sāketa. (Visuddhimagga, Vol. II., p. 390). Kāmadhātu exists in the sphere below which is the Avīci Hell and above it the Paranimmitavasavattīdeva-loka. (Visuddhimagga, Vol. II., p. 486).

Interesting information with regard to the different hells is also given by the Pañcagatidīpanaṃ. Sañjīva, Kālasutta, Saṅghāta, Roruva, Mahāruruva, Tapa,

Mahātapa and Avīci are the eight mahāmāyās. Those who kill and cause living beings to be killed out of lobha, moha, bhaya and kodha, must go to the Saūjīva hell. They suffer in this hell for one thousand years, being tormented again and again without losing life and consciousness. Those who cause injury or do harmful deeds to friends and parents, speak falsehood and backbite others, have to go to the Kālasutta hell. In this hell they are cut to pieces with burning saws just as timber is cut into planks by carpenters, after being marked off with their measuring thread. Those who kill goats, sheep, jackals, hares, deer, pigs, etc., are consigned to the Saṅghāta hell where they are huddled up in one place and then beaten to death. Those who cause mental and bodily pain to others, or cheat others or again are misers, have to proceed to the Rorūva hell where they make terrible noise while being burnt in the terrific fire of this hell. Those who steal things belonging to gods, Brahmans and preceptors, those who misappropriate the property of others kept in trust with them and those who destroy the things entrusted to their care, are cast into the Mahārōruva hell where they make a more terrible noise while being consumed by a fire, fiercer than that in the Rorūva. Those who cause the death of living beings by throwing them into dāvadaha fire, etc., have to go to Tapa hell where they have to suffer being

burnt in a dreadful fire Those who cause the death of beings by throwing them into greater dāvadaha fire, etc., must go to Mahātapa hell where they have to suffer still more by being burnt in a greater fire Those who are nihilists and who represent dhamma to be adhamma and *vice versa* must go to Patāpana hell where they suffer by being burnt in fires that are more terrific still Those who injure men of greater virtue and those who kill arahats, parents or preceptors must sink into the Avīci hell where they suffer, being burnt in such a terrific fire that would consume even the hardest things In this hell there is not the least wave of happiness, it is therefore called the Avīci or waveless (Pancagatidīpanam, J P T S., 1884, pp 154 155)

Each hell has four Ussadanirayas namely, Mīḥakūpa, Kukkuḷa, Asipat
 Ussadaniraya tavana and Nadī Those who
 are in the mahāniraya, have to proceed to Mīḥakūpa
 when released In this terrible hell, they are
 bitten by a host of worms Thence they go to
 Kukkuḷa where they are fried like mustard seeds
 on a burning pan Coming out of Kukkuḷa they
 find before them a beautiful tree full of fruits
 and flowers where they take shelter for relief
 from the torments As soon as they reach the
 tree, they are attacked by birds of prey such as
 vultures, owls, etc, having bills as hard as iron
 and also by carnivorous beasts, dogs, etc They

are killed by these animals which make a repast on their flesh. Those who fight in battle and kill each other will when in hell, be endowed with nails as brilliant as burning swords of iron with which they will scratch each other's body. Those who commit adultery will, in hell, be forcibly compelled to embrace horrible female figures of red-hot iron that will clasp them round and eat up their flesh. Those who are traitors will go to Asipattavana where they are torn and eaten up by bitches, vultures, owls, etc. Those who steal monoy will also suffer in Asipattavana hell by being compelled to swallow iron balls and molten brass. Those who kill cows and oxen, suffer in hell by being eaten up by dogs having large teeth. Those who kill aquatic animals, e g fish, will have to go to the fearful Vaitarani river where the water is as hot as molten brass, and there they will suffer for long ages. Those who prostitute justice by accepting bribes, will be cut to pieces in an iron wheel (Ibid, pp 155-156). Those who cause physical pain to others by various means are beaten with clubs and pressed under machines and mountains. Those who create quarrel between friends are led along a path as sharp as the edge of a razor. Those who destroy paddy have to suffer in the Kukkula hell.

Those who earn their livelihood by dishonest means are eaten up by worms in pits full of impurities. Those who are envious, cherish anger, or

become happy at the sight of the sufferings of others, are reborn after death in Yamaloka and the demon world. (*Pañcagatidīpanam*, p. 156). Those who cherish great anger in their hearts are reborn as swans and pigeons, etc. Those who are fools are reborn as insects. Those who are haughty and angry are reborn as snakes. Those who neglect their friends on account of pride are reborn as asses and dogs. Those who are jealous and miserly are reborn as monkeys. Those who are garrulous, fickle and shameless are reborn as crows. Those who give trouble to elephants and horses, etc., are reborn as parrots and scorpions, etc. Those who are miserly, irritable and fond of backbiting are reborn as tigers, cats, bears, etc. Those who are charitable but at the same time cherish anger, are reborn as nāgas with great miraculous powers. Those who are charitable but angry and haughty at the same time are reborn as big garuḍas. (*Pañcagatidīpanam*, pp. 156-157). Those who are deceitful and charitable are reborn as great asuras. (*Ibid*, p. 158). The Kalakāñja asuras are classed as petas.

A comparison with the Brahmanical idea of hell will show that the conception of the infernal regions is very much the same in the two systems. The names are often the same and the tortures described in the literature of the respective faiths

The Buddhist conception of hell compared with the Brahmanical idea

For adultery with a guru's wife, friend's wife and the king's wife one becomes a male-cuckoo. The libertine becomes a hog.

For obstructing sacrifices, marriages and liberality—one becomes a worm. For obtaining food without offering it to the gods and pitris—one becomes a crow and for scorning the eldest brother, a curlew. A sūdra approaching a brahmin woman becomes a worm and by begetting children by her, a wood-boring insect. A caṇḍāla for the same offense becomes a hog, a worm and a divor bird.

The murderer of a woman or the child-slayer becomes a worm while for killing an unarmed man—an ass; but by stealing food one becomes a fly. Punishments vary according to the kind of food stolen. For stealing rice-food one is born a cat; the same with sesamun and oil cake—a rat; clarified butter—an ichneumon; for venison—a hawk and so on. For stealing distilled spirits one becomes a francolin partridge. There are similar punishments for stealing different objects,

the thread of Fate—yet expiation is long to come

Corrupt brahmuns for violence during śrāddhas have to drink their own perspiration Gold stealers, slayers of brahmuns, drunkards and defilers of their guru's bed are consumed in hell fire and then born again as diseased persons Birth and death thus continue till the end of the kalpa A cow slayer goes to hell during three births. Below is a list of the strata of life into which different sinners are born on release from hell

A dwija is born as an ass for having accepted a valuable gift from an outcaste and as an worm for having sacrificed for such

For coveting a spiritual preceptor's wife or property, one is reborn as a dog For scorning parents, as an ass, for abusing them, a grackle, and for scorning a brother's wife, a pigeon, while for injuring her, the punishment is to be born as a tortoise

A man is born a monkey when he pursues not his brother's welfare while eating his pinda For embezzlement one is reborn as a worm, the detractor as a Rākshasa and the traitor, a fish An idiotic person who out of folly carries off crops is born as large mouthed ichneumon like rat

For lustfully touching a man's wife—the birth of a wolf For adultery with brother's wife—a man has to become a dog, a jackal, a heron, a vulture, a snake and a bird of prey in succession.

For adultery with a guru's wife, friend's wife and the king's wife one becomes a male-cuckoo. The libertine becomes a hog.

For obstructing sacrifices, marriages and liberality—one becomes a worm. For obtaining food without offering it to the gods and pitris—one becomes a crow and for scorning the eldest brother, a curlew. A sūdra approaching a brahmin woman becomes a worm and by begetting children by her, a wood-boring insect. A caṇḍāla for the same offence becomes a hog, a worm and a diver bird.

The murderer of a woman or the child-slayer becomes a worm while for killing an unarmed man—an ass; but by stealing food one becomes a fly. Punishments vary according to the kind of food stolen. For stealing rice-food one is born a cat; the same with sesamun and oil cake—a rat; clarified butter—an ichneumon; for venison—a hawk and so on. For stealing distilled spirits one becomes a francolin partridge. There are similar punishments for stealing different objects, e.g., for stealing iron one is-born a crow, for brass a green pigeon and so on.

For stealing learning, for not rewarding the guru and for making another's wife one's own—a man is born an eunuch after release from hell. For improper "Homa" oblation one becomes a dyspeptic. The after-characteristics of men released from hell are—abusiveness, coarseness,

in fact, in no Indian religious system, is there any conception of eternal, never-ending suffering in hell, like the Christian, or rather, the Hebrew eschatological conception of *Gehenna*, the abode of the wicked where they suffer endless torments by fire. Some of the Christian fathers no doubt hold that ultimately there would be an end to the punishment of the most wicked as well as of the devils; but this is not the idea of either the early or the mediæval Church, and even Protestant Divines stick to the idea of the never-ending punishment of the damned. This, however, is quite foreign to the Indian conception according to which every act either good or bad, produces happiness or suffering only for a limited period, though the period may be considerably long according to the nature of the deed.

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APPENDIX

BOOKS OF STORIES OF HEAVEN AND HELL

Genesis, Chronology and Utility

1. INTRODUCTORY :—The supreme necessity of inculcation of the belief in a life beyond death, in Heaven and Hell, and in distribution of rewards and punishments according to merits and demerits of one's deeds as a means of persuading the people to the path of virtue and of deterring them from the path of vice was realised by some of the Indian teachers long before the advent of the Buddha. This belief was put to the test in the 6th century B.C., when the spirit of sophistry was predominant. This called forth hostile attacks from the materialists, who were divided into two camps—the metaphysical and the politico-moral. The metaphysical school was represented by Ajita Kesakambalī and the politico-moral school came to be associated with the name of Br̥haspati or Śukra. That which came to be known long afterwards as Cārvāka philosophy was really a synthesis of the teachings of these older schools of thought. The further development of the teaching of Ajita Kesakambalī can be traced in the views of Pāyāsi (Pāesi or Prayāsi), the chieftain of Setavya in Kosala, who came into the field, according to Buddhist evidence, immediately after the demise

succeeded in striking terror in the hearts of wrong doers as also they succeeded in inducing the good people into acts of piety by holding up before them the vivid and splendid picture of paradises ready to receive them. In one of the Buddhist Birth stories¹, the great sage Sankaccā has narrated the terrible fate that overtook the tyrants and sinners on the dissolution of their mortal frame, after their death. All these he did in reply to an enquiry made by his friend who usurped the throne of Benares after killing his father in secret. The king was terror stricken, lost the peace of his mind and felt as if he was being tormented in a hell. So he became eager to hear from his friend destinies of transgressors of the moral law after death. The instances cited by the sage are as follows —

1 Ajjuna, king of the Kekavas, was a great archer. For causing annoyance to the sage Gotama he was utterly destroyed.

2 King Dandakī having insulted Kisāvacchā, the guileless ascetic, was uprooted like a palm tree.

3 King Mejjha fell from his high position for ill treatment of Mātangī the far famed sage, his kingdom became a wilderness, he died with all his subjects.

4 Members of the Andhaka Venhu race were slain by each other's race in consequence of an insult meted out to Kanha Dīpāyana.

5 Being cursed by a sage, King Cecca capable of flying through the air, was swallowed by the earth

The Sarabhangā Jātaka¹ adds two more instances of persons suffering torments in Hells —

6 King Kalābū having maimed the sinless saint, the preacher of patience, was burnt in an infernal abode

7 King Nāṁkara fell into the jaws of dogs in hell for the inhuman ill treatment of a guileless ascetic, whose body was torn to pieces and offered to dogs

The story of Dandakī is expanded in the Sarabhangā Jātaka, that of Mejjhā in the Mātanga, that of Andhaka Venhu in the Ghata Jātaka and in the Mausalaparva of the Mahābhārata, that of Kalābū in the Khantivāda Jātaka and that of Cecca in the Cetya. In one instance, the tyrannical monarch puts the ascetic to inhuman death by cutting him into pieces and offering his limbs to dogs to devour. In another instance, another king pierces a harmless saint with arrow under the misapprehension that he stood in his way as ill Luck to spoil his game. In a third instance, a courtesan, then a brahmin minister, and subsequently the king himself spit on the matted hair of an ascetic as a means of getting rid of sin and putting off calamities. In a fourth instance, the boys roughly handled a great saint

¹ Fausboll Jātaka No 510

as a matter of sport. Circumstances changed by the time of Mahāvīra and the Buddha. It is evident from the reminiscences of these two world renowned teachers, as recorded in the Jaina Ohāna Sutta¹ and the Buddhist Mahāsihanāda Sutta,² that within the Aryandom, the central region in Northern India, the mischief makers were confined to young cowherds. In non Aryan regions the whole population was against the preachers and missionaries of Aryanism. As we read in the Jaina Āyāranga Sutta, in Lāḍha or Western Bengal, the wild inhabitants used to set dogs upon the ascetics. Some of the Buddhist Suttas, e g, the Ālavaka, record chances of ascetics being thrown down precipices, being suspended from trees with head downwards or thrust into holes of monstrous serpents by the savage tribes. These tribes were actuated to this line of conduct, in cases, by a motive of self defence, as a protection against the mischiefs of the spies disguised as ascetics. To cope with this formidable opposition, the ascetics with their mission of peace found it necessary to fall back upon the only weapon in their hands likely to prove effective, namely, inculcation of moral precepts against vice and in favour of virtue, accompanied by artistic illustrations and religious demonstrations, and in certain cases, by miracles and other supernatural feats. Grim stories of sinners sent to the bottom

¹ See the Āyāranga Sutta

² See the Majjhima Nikaya

less pit of hells and of virtuous persons enjoying the bliss of paradises told with effect upon the populace. Painting had its full share in the task. By means of pictures illustrating the terrible doom of sinners and the happy lot of the pious souls, some of the ascetics sought to make a powerful appeal. As Buddhaghosa tells us, a class of beggarly brahmins sprang into being with this as their exclusive profession and they were known as Nakhas or Mankhas. According to Jaina accounts, the parents of Gosāla, the great Ājīvika leader, belonged to this class of ascetics. The Sanskrit drama *Mudrārāksasa* draws a picture of the Mauryan time when some of the naked ascetics moved about in the country with Yama-patas or Death pictures in their hands.

These pictures are described in Buddhist literature as *Karanacitra* or *Caranacitra*, praised by the Buddha himself as the very best of the pictorial art of his time. Bas-reliefs and frescoes took the place of these pictures in Buddhism. So long as Buddhism was confined during its earlier history to a region where Aryanism was the accepted creed, the Buddhist preachers did not feel the necessity of laying emphasis on sufferings in hells. But when Buddhism was propagated outside this region among peoples who were not cultured enough to be tolerant and thoughtful, they found it expedient to utilise or invent the ghastly stories of hell, full of pain and sorrow. The Suttanta

Jātakas representing the earliest forms of Buddhist Birth-stories, tell us only of a glorious life in celestial mansions. The inscriptions of Aśoka are conspicuous by the absence of any reference to hell in them. Among the large number of sculptures carved on the railing of the Barhut Stūpa, we come across only one scene of hell where a man and a woman are suffering torments for the uncondoned sin of poisoning innocent people.¹ Among the many schools of Buddhist thought, particularly among those which are pre-Aśokan, there is only one, viz., the Gokulikas or Kaukkulikas, given to pessimistic speculations, emphasizing the darker aspects of life.² Very naturally the Book of Stories of Hell developed within Buddhism later than the Book of Stories of Heaven, as being shown in the following pages.

2. CANONICAL BACKGROUND :—Two Canonical anthologies called Peta and Vimānavatthus, the Books of Stories of Heaven and Hell, seem to be, on the whole, two poetical offshoots of the Canonical Jātaka Book. These anthologies inculcating the Buddhist belief in Heaven and Hell, particularly the Book of Stories of Heaven, must be said to have, in some form or other, an important bearing on the Inscriptions of Aśoka. For instance, the expression *vimāna-dasana*³ is connected with

¹ Cunningham, Stūpa of Bharhut, Pl XL 2-5.

² Preface to the Points of Controversy, (P.T.S.)

³ Rock Edict IV "Vimānadasanā ca āsādasanā ca agikhamdhānā ca ādānā ca dīpānā rūpīnī dasayitvā" (Girnar).

the popular religious festivals, all Indian in origin, which were adopted by the Buddhists. The superstitious practice of *Vimāna-dassana* condemned in one of the poems of the Aṭṭhaka group¹ as a folly, found favour with the Buddhists of Aśoka's age, and when we search for such practices in the Canon, we find that they are in the Book of Stories of Heaven (*Vimānavatthu*), where they are canonized on an extensive scale. The conflict between these two feelings naturally indicates a long interval of religious development separating the *Vimāna-vatthu* from the Book of Octaves in the *Sutta-Nipāta*. Our presumption is intensified by the Canonical records in hand, which mark the progressive course of the belief in celestial mansions (*vimānas*). The old Indian current notion of the appearance of a god or an angel in celestial mansions glided as a belief into the Buddhist faith, and the earliest literary expression which this belief assumed is the Legend of *Serisakavimāna* in the *Pāyāsi-Suttanta*. In order to ascertain the probable date of the legend, it is essential that we must be aware of the relative position of the Legend and the main Dialogue of which the *Suttanta* is composed.

3. *PĀYĀSI-SUTTANTA* :—The Dialogue is a philosophical controversy between Kumāra Kassapa

¹ *Sutta-Nipāta* IV No. 12, stanza 10 :—

"*Disse sute silasate mute ta ele ca nisāya vimānadassī, vinicchaye
jāhā pahassamāno 'bālo paro akusalo' ti cāha*"

we ask, a greater irony than this ? The powerful chieftain, a veritable atheist, far famed throughout Northern India for his strong materialistic proclivities, to whom all the similies, legends and parables of the ' Flower-Talker ' Kassapa, perfectly innocent of all philosophical reasonings, were through almost the whole of the controversy,¹ unavailing as proofs of existence hereafter, of reward and punishment in heaven and hell, and above all, of possibility, the physical possibility,

and Pāyāsi on the future existence of man, which, according to tradition, took place shortly after the death of Gotama. The Venerable Kumāra Kassapa enjoyed, even during Buddha's life-time, the reputation of a " Flower Talker " (*Citrakathī*), and Pāyāsi, his disputant, was the chieftain of Setavya, who is said to have ruled with an iron hand and wielded an immense influence, and who was an unbeliever and a most cynical atheist. The interest of the controversy lies in this, that a professed atheist and unbeliever like Pāyāsi was at last thrown, by a bitter irony of fate, into a position where he had to appear as an ardent believer. Here ends the controversy as it occurs in the Pāyāsi Discourse, and what follows is a mythical supplement embodying a *Vimāna*-story, the *Serissaka-vimāna*,¹ in which the transformed chieftain is made to appear as a god reassuring mankind, through the Venerable Gavampati, who happened to meet the god in his empty or lonely mansion, of a life hereafter and of heavenly glory as a reward for pious gifts here below. The god Pāyāsi is represented as heightening the effect of his message to mankind by a sad contrast between the heavenly rewards which he and his disciple Uttara obtained by dispensing charity with or without the humbleness of spirit.² Can there be,

¹ The reading adopted in the PTS. edition of the *Dīgha* is *Serissaka*.

² The chieftain Pāyāsi is said to have been reborn in the lonely *Serissaka* mansion of the lowest heaven in Buddhist cosmography

we ask, a greater irony than this? The powerful chieftain, a veritable atheist, far famed throughout Northern India for his strong materialistic proclivities, to whom all the similes, legends and parables of the ' Flower-Talker ' Kassapa, perfectly innocent of all philosophical reasonings, were through almost the whole of the controversy,¹ unavailing as proofs of existence hereafter, of reward and punishment in heaven and hell, and above all, of possibility, the physical possibility, of return from the other world, whether heaven or hell, is not only represented, at the abrupt end² of the controversy, as a sincere believer, but what is more, is made to die a believer and appear a god conversing with a Buddhist Thera in his lonely mansion, as if to prove to the world by his present condition how utterly unfounded and baneful was his previous disbelief. The irony of fate does not end here. The Serissaka legend which is strictly speaking a dialogue between Gavampati and Pāyāsi would have us perceive the difference between Pāyāsi and his disciple Uttara in their present conditions, proving the relative worth of gifts, to the priesthood, bestowed

as lesser reward of liberality without humility, while his disciple Uttara got admission to a higher heaven, the Heaven of the Thirty-Three as greater reward of gifts in faith made to Buddhist priests

¹ *Dīgha II* pp 319 349

² *Ibid* p 352, where the chieftain suddenly changes his views as a consequence of a parable of Kassapa, by no means more extraordinary than others which he had been hearing over and over again but which proved futile,

and Pāyāsi on the future existence of man, which according to tradition, took place shortly after the death of Gotama. The Venerable Kum Kassapa enjoyed, even during Buddha's life the reputation of a "Flower Talker" (Citrakati) and Pāyāsi, his disputant, was the chieftain Setavya, who is said to have ruled with an iron hand and wielded an immense influence, and who was an unbeliever and a most cynical atheist. The interest of the controversy lies in this, that a professed atheist and unbeliever like Pāyāsi was at last thrown, by a bitter irony of fate, into a position where he had to appear as an ardent believer. Here ends the controversy as it occurs in the Pāyāsi Discourse, and what follows is a mythical supplement embodying a Vimāna story, the *Serissaka vimāna*,¹ in which the transformed chieftain is made to appear as a god reassuring mankind, through the Venerable Gavampati, who happened to meet the god in his empty or lonely mansion, of a life hereafter and of heavenly glory as a reward for pious gifts here below. The god Pāyāsi is represented as heightening the effect of his message to mankind by a sad contrast between the heavenly rewards which he and his disciple Uttara obtained by dispensing charity with and without the humbleness of spirit.² Can there be

¹ The reading adopted in the PTS edition of the *Digha Nikāya*.

² The chieftain Pāyāsi is said to have been reborn in the lowly *Serissaka* mansion of the lowest heaven in Buddhist cosmography.

growth of the *Scrissaka Legend* and so arranged that the second part including the first or the third part including the first and the second presents a complete narrative of its own. The first part which is a dialogue between Pāyāsi and Kumāra Kassapa gives an account of the philosophical controversy, consummated by the latter's religious discourse following the former's conversion. The second part which is a sequel to the first is similarly a dialogue between Pāyāsi and his disciple Uttara, in which the latter succeeds in persuading the former to set up gifts in faith. The dialogue is brought to a close by a brief reference to the heavens where the teacher and the pupil were reborn after death. The third part which is a sequel to the second is also a dialogue between the Venerable Gavampati and the god Pāyāsi, the scene of which is laid in the lonely *Scrissaka Mansion*. The gist of their conversation has already been referred to. It is clear, then, that the three dialogues point to three periods of Pāyāsi's life on earth and in heaven. The first, for instance, is connected with the time when the controversy took place; the second with an intermediate period which dates from the controversy and extends up to his death and also to the death of his disciple Uttara; and the third with a time when the chieftain, now a god, had to repent, long after his death and long after the death of Kassapa, over his present condition inferior, if compared with that of his disciple.

with or without the faith, which is the sole determining factor of values of gifts, irrespective of the question whether the bestower is himself the owner or an agent through whom the gifts are made

The reason is not far to seek. The account of the controversy if scrutinised leaves a permanent impression that an able controversialist like the chieftain Pāyāsi could not have been convinced by mere similes, parables and legends used as arguments and persuasions, a procedure so common amongst the popular preachers of religion. The account of the controversy fills thirty six pages in the Pāli Text Society edition of the discourse, and up to the 34th page the strong minded chieftain avowed that he was not convinced while on the 36th page, he all on a sudden confesses to his conviction. This would seem to any impartial judge most unnatural, as there is nothing exceptionally striking and forcible in the parable between pages 34 and 36, that could persuade and convert the inexorable Pāyāsi, or to induce the critic to believe that the matter had, in fact, ended so triumphantly for the Flower Talker.

4 THREE DIALOGUES —The Pāyāsi Suttanta, as it is, weaves three distinct dialogues within the narrative frame of the Legend of Serissaka Mansion. These three dialogues forming three integral parts of the Suttanta in its present form are so interwoven as to indicate three well defined stages in the

growth of the Serissaka Legend and so arranged that the second part including the first or the third part including the first and the second presents a complete narrative of its own. The first part which is a dialogue between Pāyāsi and Kumāra Kassapa gives an account of the philosophical controversy, consummated by the latter's religious discourse following the former's conversion. The second part which is a sequel to the first is similarly a dialogue between Pāyāsi and his disciple Uttara, in which the latter succeeds in persuading the former to set up gifts in faith. The dialogue is brought to a close by a brief reference to the heavens where the teacher and the pupil were reborn after death. The third part which is a sequel to the second is also a dialogue between the Venerable Gavampati and the god Pāyāsi, the scene of which is laid in the lonely Serissaka Mansion. The gist of their conversation has already been referred to. It is clear, then, that the three dialogues point to three periods of Pāyāsi's life on earth and in heaven. The first, for instance, is connected with the time when the controversy took place, the second with an intermediate period which dates from the controversy and extends up to his death and also to the death of his disciple Uttara, and the third with a time when the chieftain, now a god, had to repent, long after his death and long after the death of Kassapa, over his present condition inferior, if compared with that of his disciple

Granting that the Pāyāsi Suttanta, as we now have it, is a connected narrative of the prose legend of Serissaka Mansion, the occurrence of three dialogues can be best accounted for historically only by a theory of theological fabrication passing through two stages. Remembering that Kumāra Kassapa failed by all his flower talking to convince the strong minded chieftain of the future existence of man, a theological fabrication about Pāyāsi's conversion and pious gifts leading to his rebirth as a god in the Serissaka Mansion, would seem possible only when, after the death of Pāyāsi and after the death of Kassapa, people would have but faint memory of the controversy ending in signal defeat for a popular theologian and flower talker. Conceivably the legend had, at first, no reference exactly to the Serissaka Mansion, such particularisation being possible at a still later date. The earlier tradition probably was that the chieftain Pāyāsi was reborn after his death in the heaven of four guardian angels, while his disciple Uttara achieved greater reward as he was reborn among the gods of the Thirty three. The legend in this earlier stage afforded a nucleus whereon the third dialogue, *i.e.*, the Serissaka Legend proper was engrafted. The story of Pāyāsi's conversion and pious gifts with their heavenly reward seems to have been invented in order just to allay the fear caused in theological circles by atheistical propaganda of the powerful chieftain

and philosopher. The tradition of theological defeat and discomfiture at controversy with an atheist like Pāyāsi could not be perpetuated intact, as it would have been detrimental to the cause of popular religion.

5 AJITA AND PĀYĀSI —It may be objected that such theological inventions were unnecessary in a country which is, throughout her history, so remarkable for the freedom of thought, and that Pāyāsi was certainly not the first to promulgate dangerous atheism. Among Buddha's elder contemporaries Ajita was an avowed atheist with a large following. He was an able controversialist, a wandering sophist, held in high esteem by the people of Northern India. If it were necessary to invent mendacious traditions, about the conversion of one atheist, the opponent would say that there would have been similar traditions also about others, while, as a matter of fact, Indian literatures preserve the memory of the atheist Ajita intact, and hence the supposition of theological invention of pious legends about Pāyāsi, who thought on the lines of Ajita, is untenable. To this our reply is that the analogy does not hold good. In identifying Pāyāsi's case with Ajita's one ought not to forget two facts of great importance. (1) that time had changed since Ajita, and (2) that Pāyāsi, apart from being a philosopher occupied a high social position. While Ajita had flourished in the wake of powerful

sophistic movements and counter movements, destructive of all established religions, Pāyāsi promulgated uncompromising atheism when under the influence of Brahmanism and side by side with the new creeds which arose out of the turmoil of earlier times. Thus Ajita had to combat the custodians of one religious tradition, viz., that of the Brahmins, while Pāyāsi found himself in the midst of other enemies, the theologians of other creeds, the Jainas, the Buddhists and others. Furthermore, Ajita was only a wandering teacher who was virtually out of touch with the common run of people. A sophist like Ajita with his followers might be allowed to hold any set of opinions. His views and actions might not be regarded with so much dread, especially when there were many counterviews and counteractions to avert his influence in the wrong direction. But the case of Pāyāsi was different. The living memory and example of a ruling prince favoured, in spite of his dangerous atheism, with all the riches and honours which fall to the share of mortals would have a totally different effect on the popular mind. The tradition had to be altered so as to enable the theologians to appear before people to their best advantage. But the fact of their defeat at controversy could not at once be concealed, it is echoed in the second dialogue where the chieftain is represented as bestowing gifts, even after his conversion, without faith

Another legend had to be created to hide, so to speak, this very concealment of facts as well as to avenge the cause of the theologians. The underlying motive of the Serissaka Legend proper was to let people hear from Pāyāsī himself how the neglect of the priesthood is punished in heaven. A similar theological motive seems to have been at work behind the Jaina Upāṅga, Rāya Pasemi, which is a dialogue between two controversialists, viz., Pāesi, the king of Seyaviya (Setavya) in Kosala, and the Venerable Kumāra samana Kesī, a follower of Pārśva. The text belongs to the second stage of the Jaina Canon, and there are internal evidences, such as references to Ceylon, Arabia and Persia¹ which go at once to assign a much later date to the Upāṅga. The classical prose style and the exaggerated novelic descriptions of various vimānas² point to the same conclusion. The Jaina account of the controversy³ is on whole similar to that of the Buddhist, though not identical. Seeing that the two accounts agree in motive and execution, it may not be unreasonable to suspect that the Rāya-Pasemi has a history of its own, that it is a later recast of an earlier Jaina account now lost. The interest of the Jaina work is that it furnishes a fresh evidence, namely, that the atheistical propaganda

¹ Rāya Pasemi ed. Dharmapala p. 278

Samahāṣiṃ Āravahim . Parasubhū

² Ibid pp. 120.

³ Ibid pp. 241-296

of Pāyāsi proved dangerous to all the creeds of the time, Jaina or Buddhist

6. DATE OF SERISSAKA LEGEND :—Now, if it be granted that the Serissaka legend, or the Sūriyābha-Vimāna story, as the Jaina would say, was engrafted on an earlier tradition of Pāyāsi's conversion and heavenly reward, we have to ask, what is the probable date of the legend proper? Here we have to recall that the earlier tradition was possible only after the death of Kumāra-Kassapa and of Pāyāsi and Uttara. Hence the presumption arises that the date of the legend must have been many years after the deaths of these three personages; but when was it? The controversy itself took place, according to a reliable tradition just after the death of the Buddha. A reasonable interval must also be allowed between the controversy and the three deaths, to which we have to add the years separating the Serissaka legend from the earlier tradition. Prof. Rhys Davids places the date of the Pāyāsi-Suttanta, by modest calculation, within fifty years of Buddha's death.¹

7. PROSE AND POETIC VERSIONS OF SERISSAKA LEGEND CONTRASTED :—In the Peta and Vimāna-Vatthu versions of the Serissaka Legend a statement is put into the mouth of Pāyāsi which indicates that the Vimāna-story came to be composed a hundred years after Pāyāsi's death, but

no statement as to date is to be found in the earlier prose version of the legend in the Pāyāsi-Suttanta. There are so many notable points of difference in the two versions that they could not have been brought about in any very short period. The differences are as follows:—

- (i) The prose version of the Serissaka Legend is a dialogue between Pāyāsi and Gavampati, the express purpose of which is to bring out in bold relief the distinction between the teacher and the pupil by the difference of heavenly rewards they obtained. The poetic version which occurs in identical form in the “Book of Stories of Heaven and Hell” is on the contrary a dialogue between the angel Pāyāsi and the caravan merchants, which reveals altogether a different purpose, viz., the extolling of virtuous life on earth proceeding from right views of things.
- (ii) In the prose legend, the god Pāyāsi does not appear to come down to earth; his message is communicated to mankind through the Venerable Gavampati who was a frequent visitor of the Serissaka Mansion. In the poetic version, on the other hand, the angel Pāyāsi is represented as

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conversing on earth with the caravan merchants in distress whom he came down to succour in the midst of a vast sandy desert

- (iii) The message of Pāyāsī in the prose version seeks to instruct mankind to cultivate right devotion to the priests proving by his own existence in the lowest heaven as a lesser reward of pious gifts made without faith how the gods avenged the crime of theological sectary In the poetic version, on the contrary, the guardian angel admonishes the distressed merchants in the principles of universal religion
- (iv) The prose legend as part and parcel of the Pāyāsī Discourse is clothed in the same dull old fashioned diction of earlier Suttāntas, while the narrative in verse is one of the finest specimens of the Buddhist ballads which the Canonical Jātaka Book and the Books of Stories of Heaven and Hell can boast of
- (v) Pāyāsī's mansion in the prose version is described as *tuccha* or empty, i.e., lonely whereas in the Peta and Vimāna anthologies it is characterised as a most magnificent mansion teem

ing with a retinue of heavenly nymphs and resounding with the symphony of celestial music. This shows that the sharp distinction which was drawn in the prose legend between Pāyāsi and Uttara came to be effaced in course of time.

- (vi) This inference is well borne out by the fact that in the place of two earlier dialogues we have in the Book of Stories of Heaven two Vimāna stories, viz., that of Uttara and that of Pāyāsi, describing the glories of each god without implying any invidious distinction.

If we accept the statement of date in the poetic version of the Serissaka Legend, namely, that Pāyāsi met the caravan merchants a hundred years after his death, it follows that the date of the legend in verse cannot be earlier than the Second Council, and considering that Pāyāsi died some years after the Buddha, we must assign to the legend a date posterior to the Second Council. Taking other facts into consideration, e.g., the points of difference noticed above, we cannot but conceive a long interval of time, a century or more, between the prose legend and its poetic version.

Judging by the formal and material changes which the Serissaka Vimāna story underwent, we cannot regard the poetic version of it as a mere

prose story versified. If such is not the relation between the two versions of the story, how are we to account for these headlong changes in form and matter? The first thing that strikes us is the introduction of the caravan merchants as interlocutors of Pāyāsī in the poetic version. In the earlier account of the controversy between Kumāra Kassapa and Pāyāsī we come across a parable of caravan merchants, whereby the former tried to persuade the latter to abandon his heresies and there is no dialogue in the Pāyāsī Suttanta between Pāyāsī and the caravan merchants. This parable, we find, is developed into two stories in the Jātaka Commentary, viz., the Apannaka (No 1) and the Vannupatha (No 2). Considering that these Jātakas relate to one birth, they ought to be, according to the earlier principle of enumeration counted as one Jātaka, and we need not be surprised if they were the outcome of one Birth story in the earlier collection of 500 Jātakas, i.e., the Canonical Jātaka Book. This supposition presses upon our enquiry concerning the relative position of the Canonical Jātaka Book and the Books of Stories of Heaven and Hell.

8 SEPISSAKA LEGEND AFFORDING A COMMON BASIS — We have seen that strictly speaking the Sepissaka Vimāna story of the Pāyāsī Discourse in prose was a common historical basis of the poetic version of it, as it occurs in the Peta and the Vimāna Vatthu. It has also been indicated that the poetry

version of the story summarizes on the whole the contents of the Pāyāsi-Suttanta considered as a complete narrative of Pāyāsi. Many Birth-stories, e.g., the Apannaka, the Vannupatha, the Litta and the rest developed from the similar legends and parables used as arguments and persuasions by Kumāra Kassapa. Thus it would appear that these Jātakas and the Books of Stories of Heaven and Hell were two parallel growths from the same historical basis, viz, the Pāyāsi Discourse. But looking from another standpoint, i.e., judging from their literary forms and contents, the Peta and Vimāna anthologies may justly be represented as two offshoots of, and developments from the Canonical Jātaka Book. The prose and poetic versions seem to have a direct connection with each other in so far as they seek to inculcate belief in heaven and hell. But the poetic version, as we have noticed, exhibits many new features of its own, which cannot be explained by a theory of direct development. Let us then enquire how these features came to be. These characteristic changes in the poetic version must have a history of their own, and we think that it is the history of the development of the Peta and the Vimāna Vatthu from the Pāyāsi Discourse through a somewhat different literary medium viz. the Canonical Jātaka Book.

9. JĀTAKA A MEDIUM FOR PETA-VIMĀNA-STORIES :—The Peta and the Vimāna Vatthu, as

we now have them, preserve two common stories viz, the famous Serissaka story and the charming story of Mattakundali. The latter occurs in the same ballad form in the Canonical Jātaka Book, as may be judged from the poetical extracts in the Jātaka Commentary. The occurrence of the story in identical form in the Books of Stories of Heaven and Hell suggests a common source, which appears to us to be the larger anthology of ballads called the Jātaka Book. An objection may be raised that the ballad in the Jataka Book might have been derived as well from the Peta and the Vimāna Vatthu. We contend that the Books of Stories of Heaven and Hell cannot precede the Canonical Jātaka Book, and our position is defended by the evidence of the Serissaka ballad contrasted with its basis in the prose version as it occurs in the Pāyāsi Suttaṃ. The difference of the two versions lies in their morals. While the message of Pāyāsi in the prose version is coloured by theological motive since it teaches mankind to make gifts in faith to the priesthood, the instruction of the angel Payasi in the ballad is free from all theological narrowness, inculcating as it does a religion of universal moral precepts, which is the essential element of the Jātaka cult. This feature is characteristic of all the ballads in the Peta and the Vimāna Vatthu which have developed a cult which is absent from their basis, the Serissaka Legend in prose, and when we discover

that those lesser anthologies are kindred not only in morals, but also in literary forms to the larger anthology, the Jātaka Book, we cannot resist the only legitimate conclusion that the Jātaka Book was the medium through which passed the Serissaka Vimāna doctrine, and by which *a fortiori* the lesser anthologies were influenced in more ways than one

Now we will enquire how the Serissaka doctrine promulgating belief in heaven (and hell by implication) could be transmitted through the Jātaka medium before these ideas of heaven and hell came to be distinctly pronounced in two separate though companion anthologies

In dealing with the origin of the Jātakas we find that similes or parables were used by the Buddha only as illustrations of certain moral points irrespective of any reference to future existence, while similar illustrations were resorted to by Kumāra Kassapa in his controversy after Buddha's death as arguments in support of his belief in future existence, reward and retribution expressed in current folk tales. Kumāra Kassapa utilised the current fables and similes for establishing the popular Law of Karma, implying future existence, reward and retribution and heaven and hell. At a certain later date the fables used by the Buddha and his disciple Kumāra Kassapa were transformed into Jātakas, or more properly, Suttanta Jātakas when a new element, viz, the

belief in incarnation crept into them, without losing their original purposes, viz, the inculcation of moral principles and the promulgation of the Law of Karma. Since the popular Law of Karma as expounded by Kumāra Kassapa contributed towards the Jātaka cult and remained an essential feature of it, we can easily understand how the special Vimāna doctrine expressed in the Serissaka Legend in prose, viz, belief in heaven, proceeding from the implications of Kumāra Kassapa's arguments, could *a fortiori* flow through the medium of the Jātaka cult.

10 TRANSFORMATION OF PROSE LEGEND —

But did the earlier Vimāna doctrine of the Serissaka story in prose leave any trace in course of being transmitted through the Jātaka? Here, too, we say, Yes. The earlier the Jātaka the more prominent is the trace. All the four Suttantas, which among the earliest forms of Jātakas played a very important role in the development of later Jātaka literatures, viz, the Mahāpadāna, the Mahāsudassana and the rest, bear testimony to a close connection with the Serissaka legend, in language, form, and partly in purpose. The Mahāpadāna Book furnishes instances of communion between man and god, typified respectively by the Buddha and Brahma, while the Mahāsudassana reflects the grandeur of a celestial mansion in the description of kusāvatī, an old idealised city. The Mahāgovinda dazzles the reader's vision

with the sudden illumination which precedes the appearance of the Brahma mansion, and which acts as a signal for the gods of the Thirty three assembled in the Sudhammā Council Hall to hail the mysterious dweller of the Mansion, Brahmā Sanampkumāra alighting to participate in their rejoicings at the surpassing glory of the Buddhist newcomers who have merited abodes in the Tāvātīpasa Heaven. The Makhādeva relates how Sakka, king of the gods, came down in his chariot the Sudhammā Hall to escort from the earth, in behalf of the gods of the Thirty three, the pious king Nimi of Mithilā. And these oldest known Jātakas preserved these traces, even when they were transformed into ballads in the Canonical Jātaka Book, although these traces were eclipsed for a time by the grandeur of poetry, only to reappear in their fullness in the Peta and the Vimāna Vatthu. In other words, the Peta and the Vimāna Vatthu are not selections from the Canonical Jātaka Book, but rather a richer development of the earlier prose legend of Serissaka Mansion under the influence of the Jātaka. The partial independence of the Peta and the Vimāna Vatthu can be substantiated by the fact that these smaller anthologies contain but one story from the Jātaka Book viz that of Mattakundalī. Moreover, that they had a common origin is proved by the Serissaka story preserved in identical form in both the Peta and the Vimāna Vatthu.

11 SERISSAKA BALLAD IN THE PETAVATTHU —

It remains to be explained how the Serissaka Vimāna story could find a place in the Book of Stories of Hell. The only reasonable explanation is that in the earlier Serissaka Legend in prose, there is an idea of punishment implied in the distinction drawn between the heavenly rewards obtained by Payāsi and Uttara. The reminiscence of this older distinction is preserved in the two stories of the Vimāna Vatthu, the Uttaravimāna representing Uttara as a dweller of a magnificent abode in the Heaven of the Thirty three, and the Serissaka Vimāna representing Pāyāsi as the dweller of a mansion in a lower Heaven, viz., the Cātummahārājika. And it was perhaps to perpetuate the old idea of inferiority that Pāyāsi was made to appear also in the Petavatthu, the main purpose of which was to impress on the people the inevitability of punishment awaiting all wrong doers in the other world. And since the idea of inferiority in the older Vimāna doctrine of the prose Serissaka Legend developed into a full fledged doctrine of Hell, the Vimāna doctrine must be taken to be prior, at least logically, to the Peta.

12 CHRONOLOGY OF JĀTAKA AND VIMĀNA

STORIES — To sum up, we get the following chronology of the Jātaka and Vimāna stories —

- (1) Similes and parables used by the Buddha as illustrations of moral points

- (ii) Similes and parables used by Kumāra Kassapa in his controversy, shortly after the death of the Buddha as arguments and persuasions.
- (iii) The Serissaka Legend in prose in the Pāyāsi-Suttanta, the date of which is placed by Prof. Rhys Davids within 50 years of the Buddha's death.
- (iv) The Suttanta-Jātakas which can be dated not much later than the Second Council, i.e., a hundred years, more or less, after Buddha's death.
- (v) The Canonical Jātaka Book, which is earlier than the Vimāna and the Peta Vatthu, the typical Serissaka story of which cannot be assigned, according to tradition, a date exceeding a century after the death of Pāyāsi.

Even if we accept the traditional date of a century, and if we remember that Pāyāsi survived the Buddha, the Serissaka-vimāna story in verse, as it occurs in the Vimāna and the Peta Vatthu, must be assigned a date later than the Second Council, and as we have indicated, this date is later not only than the Suttanta-Jātakas but also than the Canonical Jātaka Book. As to the lower limit of the date of the Serissakavimāna-ballad, and *a fortiori* of the Books of Stories of Heaven and Hell, a conception may be formed in the light of the following evidences.

13 AS'OKA'S DHAMMA AND VIMĀNA-DOCTRINE —If we analyse Aśoka's religion in the light of his inscriptions with the exception of a few special edicts, we are struck by its close resemblance with the Vimāna doctrine as we find in the Book of Stories of Heaven, and it is most curious that the special doctrine of the Book of Stories of Hell has not played any part in it. The religion of Aśoka presents two aspects—moral and popular, the former representing a body of moral precepts applicable to all, and the latter comprising faith in the Triad, pilgrimage to holy places to worship the Buddhas, and such public and festive demonstrations as *vimānadasana*, *hasṭidasana* and illumination (*agikhamdhāni*). And these are nothing but the characteristic features of the Vimāna-doctrine above referred to. Whether the *Vimānavatthu* in its present form existed then or not, it is clear that some Vimāna stories, in some form or other, were known, though not of course in the earlier prose form of the Serissaka story. The phases of belief which have found expression in the *Vimānavatthu* are characterised by a humanizing spirit rendering the abstract, concrete or practical. The stories teach that the householders can become dwellers of celestial mansions which vary in glory and splendour according to the merits gained by the following acts of piety and religious observances (*dhammacariya*) —

(a) Faith in the Three Jewels (*tiratanesu saddhā*)

- (b) *Buddhavandanā*—Various modes of salutation to the Buddha, touching his feet (*pādavandanā*) or with folded hands (*añjalikamma*) with a mind transported with joy (*mudṭamano*), and a heart serene (*pasannacitto*.)
- (c) *Buddhapūjā*—Worshipping the Buddha with offerings of flowers and perfumes.
- (d) *Cetiyavandanā*, *Thūpapūjā*, *Dhātu-pūjā*,
—Worship of shrines, topes and relics.
- (e) *Uposatha*—Observance of the Sabbath.
- (f) *Sīlasamādāna*—Keeping of the precepts.
- (g) *Kiccāni*—Fulfilment of duties by man and woman.
- (h) *Āsana*—Cordial reception of the Buddha and his followers.
- (i) *Dāna*—Liberal gifts of food and drink and other requisites to the Buddha and the Order.
- (j) *Vihāradāna*—Dedication of *Vihāras* to the Buddha and the Order.
- (k) *Bhikkhādāna*—Alms-giving.
- (l) *Ārāma-ropā*, *Vana-ropā*, *Caṅkama*,
Pokkharañī—Laying out of gardens, planting of trees, construction of roads, and excavation of tanks.
- (m) *Rathapadīpādī*—Gifts of chariots and providing lights, etc.
- (n) *Puññānumodanā*—Participation in virtuous deeds.

14 VIMĀNA AND APADĀNA STORIES CONTRASTED — These Vimāna ideas of piety were intensified later in the legends of the Apadāna which virtually did away with the precepts and duties of life, and emphasized only such formal aspects of religion as *Pūjā*, *Vandanā*, *Dana* and *Dakṣinā*. Among other differences, the following are the most noticeable —

1 Like the inscriptions of Asoka, the Vimāna stories hold out for the householder a promise of heavenly reward generally in the immediate future,¹ while the Apadāna legends invariably illustrate by the lives of Theras and Theris how heavenly rewards thus obtained are continued through many cycles of existence and multiplied, until these lead to Arahatsip.

2 The Vimānavatthu sets out a religion for the householder, stripped of the idea of renunciation, whereas the Apadāna legends combine by a peculiar mythological device the pious life of the householder with the higher attainments of the recluse, the latter overshadowing the former a synthesis unknown in the time of Asoka.

3 The Vimāna stories promulgate generally the worship of the present Buddha² with his doctrine and followers, while the Apadāna legends by their *Adhikāravāda* exalt the past Buddhas and bring

¹ The Vimāna story of Revatī (No. 52) which also occurs as a Peta story in the Petavatthu is one of the few exceptions.

² The Vimāna story (No. 82) which mentions Sumedha a past Buddha is one of the few exceptions.

into prominence the worship of shrines, relics and topes.

4. The emphasis laid in the Vimāna stories is on the whole on individual morality and duty, while the Apādāna legends emphasize mainly the æsthetic, charitable and humanitarian aspects of the faith.

It seems as if the Vimānavatthu and the Apādāna represent the two sides of Aśoka's religion. For the instructions in Aśoka's inscriptions are only a reproduction of the teachings of the Vimānavatthu,¹ and the Apādāna legends are nothing but the embodiment of Aśoka's personal practices. And the conflict between the Vimāna and Apādāna doctrines is the same as that between Aśoka's teachings and practices. What we find in Aśokan inscriptions is in spirit but a faithful reproduction of the Buddha idea of worship, which consists in following his instructions and not in personal homage and offerings, the foolish ways of common people. But in his personal practices Aśoka himself appears to have followed a mode of worship which the Buddha had denounced as vulgar. In the history of this conflict between the two forms of Buddha worship, the Apādāna marks a stage in the growth of the Buddhist creed when the ethical side practically disappeared yielding place to the popular. The result was that the emotional side of the faith overshadowed its previous rationality (*paññānvayatā*).

¹ Notably the Vimāna story of Revati (No. 52).

